AZAD KASHMIR

(FREE KASHMIR)

A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST CONCEPTION

By the same author

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(FREE KASHMIR)

A Democratic Socialist Conception

BY

PREM NATH BAZAZ

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Ferozsons

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To

MY WIFE BADRI

Who has immensely suffered for
the cause of Kashmir's - Freedom

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INTRODUCTION

NEWSPAPER reading public all over the world have become familiar, during the last three years, with a new name—Azad Kashmir. It is well known that soon after the partition of the sub-continent of India when the future of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was uncertain and the Ruler displayed signs of his desire to accede to India against the obvious inclination of the overwhelming majority of his Muslim subjects a rebellion broke out in the country to depose him from the throne. The rebels succeeded in seizing a part of the State on its west and north and in establishing authority of their own. These areas came to be known as Azad Kashmir and its authority as the Azad Kashmir Government. Opinions are divided about the constitutional claims, legal status, moral standing and the representative character of the rebel Government. Reactionaries among the Hindus in India whose number is unfortunately very large and who

have generally always opposed the nationalist aspirations of the Kashmir Muslims ever since the first upheaval broke out against the Dogra autocracy in 1931, condemn the Azad Kashmir Movement as an adventure of marauders, looters and cut-throats. To them the National Conference is the genuine popular Party representing the will of the four million people of the State. It is interesting to recall that during the period 1931-39 these very Hindus used to apply the same epithets to Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues for their devotion to the cause of the liberation of Kashmir which they are using for Azad Kashmir leaders now. Many of them continued to talk about the Nationalist leaders in condemnatory and contemptuous tones till the very eve of the Kashmir war. Be that as it may, this is true that at present there are very few Hindus who have any sympathy with the Azad Kashmir Movement.

In opposition to this the Muslims, particularly the Pakistanis, are all praise for Azad Kashmir Movement and its leaders. Every effort is being made to whitewash their sins of omission and commission. The Pakistani Muslims recognize in the ideals of this movement the true expression of the inner feelings of the down trodden, enslaved and suppressed peoples of the State.

Both these views are passionately held and have created great bitterness between Hindus

and Muslims everywhere in the sub-continent. This not only causes internal conflicts in the politics of both India and Pakistan but also estranges the relations between them. That is very sad.

Unbelievably enough, precious little is known outside the State about the origin of Azad Kashmir Movement and what it really stands for in the eyes of the people of the Valley. No outsider knows that this movement (even the very name Azad Kashmir) is older than the accession issue and was started by an influential band of public workers, both Muslim and Hindu, long before partition of the sub-continent or Pakistan came into existence. Their conception of Azad Kashmir is undoubtedly quite different, based as it is on the high principles of Radical Humanism and democratic Socialism. I venture to suggest that if this truth is widely known much of the bitterness would lessen and possibly such a knowledge would contribute to the solution of the most difficult and intricate problem of Kashmir.

The slogan of Azad Kashmir was raised, for the first time, in the plenary session of the Party gathering of the Kashmir Kisan Mazdoor Conference which was held in Kaba Marg, a village in the Anant Nag district on 12th May, 1946. As a matter of fact, one of the several gates admitting visitors to spacious pandal of

the session was named as the Azad Kashmir Gate.

The plenary session adopted the Constitution of the Party depicting in very few words the political, economic, social and cultural structure of the Azad Kashmir State, the attainment of which was the goal of the Party. It was further decided that a comprehensive manifesto be prepared to enlarge and explain in detail what was tersely mentioned in the Constitution. The Working Committee of the Party commanded me to prepare a draft of the manifesto. Before I could do so India was partitioned, the Kashmir war for liberation broke out and I, along with hundreds of my colleagues, was thrown into prison. In the long period of three years I remained in detention, I was refused permission by the Government of the Indian-held territories of Kashmir to write any book.

While we were behind the bars, an independent Government came into existence over a part of the State and strangely enough, as said above this came to be known as Azad Kashmir Government. It was, however, formed by and is at present entirely composed of the Muslim Conference leaders. The most important problem before this Government as before all other political parties and, indeed, before the whole population of the State is whether the State should accede to India or

Pakistan. It is universally accepted that the issue should be decided according to the will of the State's people and by the democratic method of a free and fair plebiscite. Now the result of this plebiscite will depend to a considerable extent on what are the ideals and the future programmes of the different parties supporting one or the other side. It is obvious that the people will vote for the side which can bring them the grestest possible freedom and happiness. I think this is, therefore, the opportune moment when our manifesto should have been published. Unfortunately, there are many difficulties in doing so, the greatest under the present conditions being the impossibility of the scattered members of the Party to meet at one place ; some of the members have been forced to cross the cease-fire line, the President is still in jail, and I have been externed from Kashmir.

In these circumstances, I have written this book with the purpose of conveying to the people both inside and outside the State what our conception of a free Kashmir is.

I have devoted a large space to the accession dispute and discussed it first because it is the burning topic of the day and needs a thorough analysis. Our approach to the whole Kashmir problem is quite uncommon—a non-communal party with avowed socialistic views supporting Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, a State run on

Islamic principles. I hope this novelty will make the discussion more interesting for the reader if he has the patience to go through these pages.

In dealing with all matters in this book, I have tried to place the views of the Party before the public by closely following the resolutions, pronouncements and declarations as best as I could. But I must warn the reader that whatever is expressed in the book should not be taken as the authoritative opinions of the Kashmir Kisan Mazdoor Conference. For the present they are my personal views and are not binding on the Party. Members of the party have the right to amend, alter or add to anything contained in the book if they choose to do so.

I have chosen the conversational form as the method of expressing my views as I think it carries the point home in a way as no other method does ; it is also easy for an average reader to comprehend the controversy when put in this form.

I am indebted to some of my friends who have taken pains to go through the Manuscrip of this book before it went to the press and made some valuable suggestions; particularly I am grateful to Mr. G. A. Raza who also read the proofs.

PREM NATH BAZAZ.

DELHI, *September 20, 1950.*

AZAD KASHMIR

(FREE KASHMIR)

A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST CONCEPTION

CHAPTER I

INDIA OR PAKISTAN ?

Question.—I am curious to know your views about the future of Kashmir. It is said that you are a Pakistani and uphold the two-nation theory of the Muslim League. I believe that you advocate Kashmir's accession to the Dominion of Pakistan and that you vehemently oppose the retention of the present position. I am really surprised at this. It appears strange to me that an educated Hindu like you, who is also supposed to be an experienced politician holding progressive views, should cherish such uncommon and entirely anti-nationalist views. In my opinion no patriot can countenance them.

Answer.—The reports you have heard about my views on politics are either distorted or baseless. I am neither a Pakistani in the sense that I believe in the ideology of the present-day rulers of Pakistan nor do I subscribe to the two-nation theory of the Muslim League. I have always been a critic of the League ideology and have consistently opposed the two-nation theory during the past ten years since it was first adumberated by Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah in his Presidential address to the Muslim League. Indeed, I wrote innumerable articles in the

daily *Hamdard* proving that this theory would be most difficult to implement and disastrous in consequence. In my book *Gandhism, Jinnahism and Socialism*, which you do not appear to have read, I emphasized that the people of the Indian sub-continent are one nation and could not be divided on the basis of their religions alone, when they possess many other factors in common. But, in spite of this, I do advocate that, all things considered, Kashmir should accede to the Dominion of Pakistan and not remain with Bharat. I believe that the State has been forcibly occupied by the Indian Military against the will of the people. This is brutal aggression and, therefore extremely intolerable and highly dangerous. At present only Muslims appear to be aggrieved at the high-handedness of the Indian Government. But in the long run this state of affairs, if it unfortunately continues, will harm the Hindus, probably more than the Muslims. Such symptoms are already becoming manifest. So as a Hindu no less than a Kashmiri I must demand that the Indian forces should withdraw and leave my country to enable the people to do as they like—accede to India or Pakistan as they find helpful and advantageous for themselves.

You believe that Nationalism, or rather secularism, is the monopoly of the Congress and India. Therefore to support Kashmir's accession to the Indian Union, whether people want

it or not, is the only course for a progressive nationalist to adopt. I suffer from no such prejudice. I try to be scientific and rationalist in my political views. I am as much a critic of the Gandhian ideology of Nationalism as of the communalist two-nation theory. The Hindu press has created an illusion for you by consistently and assiduously dinning into your ears that the Congress has been preaching and practising Nationalism which knows no distinction of caste or creed and that the Indian Republic is a secular State in which all communities are treated alike. I am sorry I cannot oblige you by believing in this propaganda without caring to examine the Congress claim. You have taken it as gospel truth and want every one also to do so. My views therefore sound naturally anti-nationalist and intolerable to you.

You know that despite the loud protestations of all Congress leaders against the partition of India they agreed to the creation of Pakistan. The sub-continent was divided on the communal basis. Those areas where Hindus are in majority were included in India and those regions where Muslims happened to be in majority formed what is now known as Pakistan. The Congress leaders had claimed that the people of N. W. F. P. believed in Gandhian ideology and would not like to remain with Pakistan. An analogous claim was made regarding Sylhet,

a district of Assam, predominantly populated by Muslims. But when plebiscites were held in both these places to ascertain the truth, the Congress claims were falsified by the results. So it is safe to presume that Muslims all over the sub-continent have no faith in the Congress Nationalism and want to live separately wherever they can.

Kashmir is preponderantly Muslim. It is therefore just and rational as well as democratic that it should be allowed to accede to Pakistan. After what happened in the N.W. F. P. and Sylhet it is foolish to assume that Kashmir Muslims will ever think of remaining with India. In order, however, that no doubt may be left in the mind of any one I and those who agree with me have from the very start—as far back as September, 1947—stressed that the issue should be settled by an impartial and free referendum on the basis of adult franchise. If this is not patriotic, democratic and nationalistic, I wonder what is ?

Question.—It was intransigence on the part of Mr. Jinnah, encouraged by the British imperialists, that necessitated the partition of India. Now that the British are gone there is no need to allow an inalienable part of India—Kashmir—to accede to Pakistan. I think it will be disastrous for the State to leave India and join Pakistan.

Answer.—You are not wholly correct in your observations about the cause of partition of India. What you state as the cause is a pet theory of the Hindus in general and the Gandhian Nationalists in particular, assiduously fostered by the Congress press and the Congress leaders. The fact however is that both the Congress and the League are equally responsible for the partition. Had Congressmen stood sincerely for the legitimate rights of all communities, theoretically aswell as practically, and never made any distinction in their daily dealings between the followers of one creed as against another, the question of partition would never have arisen. Since Mahatma Gandhi occupied the Congress stage in India the politics of this organization was deeply dyed in Hindu revivalism. 'Back to Vedic and Puranic' times has been the battle cry of the Mahatma while fighting against British imperialism. No doubt it awakened the backward and religion-ridden Hindu masses emotionally, but at the same time it did a great harm ; it antagonized all non-Hindus, especially Muslims who formed the second largest community in India. Justifiably, the Muslims sensed danger to their religion and culture if Gandhian Nationalists came to power at the fall of British imperialism. They were driven to become separatists. They needed a leader and got one in the person of Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah who expressed this inner urge of the Muslims in his two-nation theory.

Had Gandhism been progressive and the composite Nationalism of all the people of the Indian sub-continent untainted by the curse of Hindu revivalism there could be no attraction for Muslims in the two-nation theory of Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah. That he influenced millions of Muslims by his word which moved the hearts of his hearers is a good proof of the fact that there was a sub-stratum of truth in what he said. It is childish to believe that millions of people, including many intellectuals, followed Jinnah unwillingly simply because the British wanted it. Jinnah wielded no Governmental power till 15th August ,1947. Even his political instrument, the Muslim League, was very weak organizationally as comapred with the Congress. He had almost no press to ventilate his views. Yet he was supremely successful in rallying the forces against Gandhian Nationalism. Unless there was something fundamentally wrong with the Congress, Muslims could not so rapidly leave this powerful and influential body and join the League. The wrong, as an unbiassed man could easily find, was that Gandhism is not progressive Nationalism or secularism but is Hindu communalism masquerading as Indian Nationalism. Victims of high powered Congress publicity the Hindus could not comprehend this reality. The more popular Jinnah and League became, the more the Hindus condemned Muslim communalism and praised their own communalism in the

shape of Gandhian nationalism. This widened the gulf between the two communities and finally brought about Pakistan. The Congress leaders were forced to accept this solution not because the British pressed them to do so, as you seem to imply, but because they were faced with the natural and inevitable consequences of their own ideology—Gandhism. They had slowly and steadily travelled in this direction and towards this goal for many years and long before Jinnah had sponsored his two-nation theory. Not without some significance, Lord Mountabatten, an Englishman and the author of the partition plan, is considered to be the best friend of India by the Congress leaders. For his benefactions and in token of gratitude he was made the first Governor-General of free India by these leaders. So the theory that Britishers forced Pakistan on Congress leaders cannot be maintained.

As in the case of the whole sub-continent so also regarding Kashmir, sooner or later the Congress leaders will be faced with grim realities. They will find that despite their best efforts the State Muslims are dead against acceding to the Indian Union because they feel attracted towards Pakistan for various reasons—chiefly cultural affinity and religious tie with the people of Pakistan. That will force Congress leaders to part with the State. Before division Kashmir was an inalienable part of India in every respect but now the union of the two will be

of dubious advantage and untenable. Kahsmir is a natural part of Pakistan and should accede to it. You are believing in the popular nationalist myth and not in facts when you say that it will be disastrous for the State to leave India and join Pakistan. The truth is the other way round.

Question.—Mahatma Gandhi's teachings were cosmopolitan and he fought all through his life for the emancipation, progress and prosperity of all classes and communities. On the other hand, Mr. Jinnah was a sectarian leader with a narrow outlook. There was nothing common between the two. Had Muslims not been fanatic about their religion and had they any patriotic feelings in them, they would have rallied under the Mahatma's banner. Mr. Jinnah misled them to a wrong path which brought about a disaster in which millions were either massacred or rendered destitute and homeless. Should not therefore Kashmir Muslims abandon Jinnahism and adopt the glorious and libertarian creed of Gandhism ?

Answer.—What you say about the respective philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah is the usual superficial reading of the average nationalist. But these observations cannot hold true in the eyes of critical and discriminating people. If we look deeply into the sayings of the two leaders, we shall find

that they were not so very different from each other. Indeed, they had much in common and only differed in that one was the leader of the Hindus and the other of the Muslims. So they had to frame their programmes differently though basically they were fighting for the same goal. Shorn of their specious cosmopolitan trappings, Gandhiji's political preachings were nothing more than the expression of the urge of Hindu nationalistic freedom. It was a reactionary Nationalism, which looked backward to derive inspiration from Vedic and Puranic periods in which non-Hindus could obviously have little interest. In actual practice Congress Nationalism was not cosmopolitan, although Gandhiji paraded his altruistic ideas in season and out of season. It was narrow, aggressive and based on hatred of non-Indian races. In such an atmosphere, Muslims also were looked upon as aliens because their religion and culture is not indigenous and has been imported from Arabia. It was as a reaction to the development of this outlook among Hindus under Gandhian leadership that Jinnahism took birth. Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah awakened nationalistic sentiment among Indian Muslims in the same way and on a similar basis as the Mahatma did among the Hindus. He roused the same spirit of aggression and reaction by looking backwards and deriving inspiration from the glorious past achievements of Islam. Only Jinnah did not talk tall and indulge in cosmo-

politan sentiments to hoodwink the world. He was a man of few words, more outspoken, more practical and sagacious as a politician.

Both Gandhism and Jinnahism are revivalist and reactionary creeds. Both are suited to the needs of upper classes and exploiters. Both flourish among ignorant people of low culture. Both appeal to sentiment and not to reason. So long as the people of the subcontinent of India are steeped in superstition and prejudice and do not rise culturally both these creeds will remain very popular.

Only those who are incapable of looking below the surface think that Mahatma Gandhi and Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah were fundamentally different from each other. In fact they were two sides of the same coin. Had not the greed of Hindu revivalists and capitalists blinded them and had they been able to see the interests and sympathise with the sentiments of Muslims, there were no two men in India who could have formed each others supplement than the Mahatma and the Quaid-i-Azam.

Question.—It is very difficult to follow you. You have rejected Gandhism though it shows us the path of non-communal Nationalism and even though founded on its cardinal principles, the Indian Republic has become a secular State. You also do not approve of Jinnahism which

upholds communalism. I can easily understand and appreciate your rejection of sectarian politics as means to the great goal of freedom, but I cannot comprehend what can be the basis of your politics when you oppose even the non-communal approach of Gandhism. Will you explain that? Also I would like to know your views on Nationalism and patriotism.

Answer.—I have been at pains to explain that Gandhism is not what it professes to be. There are two main reasons for this. First, the aim of Gandhism is the revival of ancient Brahmanic culture which is narrow in outlook and is based on super-naturalism and mysticism. Therefore, in spite of its big claims this creed could not but alienate the sympathies of the followers of all other religions and cultures. Secondly, in actual practice Gandhists have been belying all their professions. You are allured by the resolutions and statements of Congress leaders, but you should not altogether shut your eyes to their deeds. Gandhism in its application to the Indian political, social and economic problems has always demonstrated itself to be no more than a handy weapon for the Hindus to grind their own axe. It is in no way better than the communalism of Jinnah. Indeed, from a certain consideration it is even worse. For, it breeds hypocrisy and an unhealthy sense of superiority in the followers of the creed. An

revivalist attitude, whether that be adopted openly as is done in Pakistan or under the garb of charming declarations as is the case in India. We must steer clear of the shoals and boulders of narrow-mindedness, racial bigotry, religious fanaticism and national or cultural vanity. Secularism we must have but it must be entirely free from any religious bias. That does not mean that there should be any suppression of religious opinion. No; every one must be completely free to profess or practise any religion, creed or philosophy he believes in, but the State should not directly or indirectly, support or encourage any religion. Neither Gandhism nor Jinnahism does this. Under pretext of preserving, maintaining and reviving ancient Indian culture, Hindu religion is being supported by the present Government of India. For instance, cow slaughter is being progressively banned; famous old temples are being renovated; Hindi and Sanskrit are being thrust upon people as their language etc. The leaders of Pakistan, including Ministers of the Government, on the other hand, openly and unambiguously state that they have to establish a Muslim State on the basis of Islamic teachings. Both are therefore unsuited to the freedom of the peoples of India and Pakistan.

Nationalism and patriotism are good objectives, but only within limits. A man is born in a certain region of the world. Naturally

therefore he has a certain amount of affection for the people, birds, animals, mountains, rivers and trees of that region than for the rest of the world. His love of Humanity at large also can be easily and conveniently expressed by working for the welfare and progress of the people of his own country. To this extent both Nationalism and patriotism are laudable qualities. But usually we find that both these virtues become abominable vices. Under the influence of Nationalism and patriotism one begins to hate all foreigners and thinks that the interests of Nationalism can be served best by subjugating others and depriving them of their legitimate freedom. Nationalism and patriotism have come to consist in the utterance " my country, right or wrong". All sense of equity, justice and righteousness leaves nationalists and patriots. In this state their creed becomes a vice, a disease. They must be shunned by all lovers of humanity. We must have the courage to tell the rulers of our country when they go wrong that they have gone wrong. We must, at the risk of any consequences withdraw our support and fight for the cause of any other country which we feel has been victimized under nationalistic and patriotic greed.

It is not the myopic nationalists and patriots who can achieve real freedom, for any country. Those who aspire to grab the rights of others can never be free themselves. Only those who

can think of the freedom of their own country in the context of the freedom of entire humanity, not only theoretically, but also practically by working for this ideal, can ultimately free us. We should unflinchingly, whole-heartedly and devotedly strive to create a community of such men in Kashmir.

Question:—You know that the tribesmen attacked Kashmir in October 1947, looted and plundered the people and molested women. Pakistan supported and abetted them. It was then that the Maharaja was forced to approach India for help. The representatives of the people, that is the nationalist leaders, also did the same. The India Government protected us from the ravages and brutalities. They exhibited a high moral standard of public duty. As against this, Pakistan defended the aggression of the tribesmen and even sent her troops to aid them. How can we be ungrateful and forget this timely relief of India and the enmity of Pakistan. India's moral position is indeed very high in the estimation of all sane people.

Answer.—To fix blame and find out who is the aggressor it is very important that we should take into consideration all the facts before and after the tribesmen entered the State in October 1947. Many people in India do not do so and therefore form wrong judgements.

India was partitioned according to the Mountabatten Plan on a religious basis as early as June 1947. This plan made the future of Kashmir quite clear; it could not but go to Pakistan. But soon afterwards, the Congress leaders, unmindful of the consequences, successfully persuaded the Maharaja to accede to India even against the will of the Muslim majority. Mahatma Gandhi visited Kashmir in the first week of August that year and got the Maharaja's consent confirmed. The Nationalist leaders were consulted in jail and they too agreed to this mischievous and ruinous plan.

The Maharaja was advised to continue the show of neutrality but the policy of his Government was enough to show which way the wind blew. Both the leaders of the National Conference and the Muslim Conference were in jail at the time, the former for rebellion and the latter for having technically defied an order of the District Magistrate. The Nationalist leaders, though sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, were released but Muslim Conference leaders, though in simple detention, were kept behind bars. All papers advocating the State's accession to Pakistan or even disapproving accession to India were stopped or penalized otherwise. Leaders of political parties not falling in line with the Government policy were gagged, arrested or deported. None but

the Nationalists were allowed to take out processions and hold meetings. People were shot in Poonch like dogs and whole villages burnt. This happened during August, September and October. The Maharaja was repeatedly warned but to no purpose. If then, the tribesmen came to Kashmir to help their Muslim brethren on October 23, 1947 in their sad plight, how can we call it aggression ? I have no desire to condone, much less support the condemnable actions of loot and savagery of individual tribesmen, but we should see what was their motive on the whole. That is clear. They wanted to liberate Kashmir from the tyranny of the Maharaja and nationalist renegades. And we should not forget that some members of the Indian army did no less of looting and molesting.

After having partitioned India on a religious basis, the Congress leaders had no moral right to go to Kashmir especially when they had refused to accept the Junagadh Nawab's declaration to accede to Pakistan. There should be no doubt that, whatever Pandit Nehru might say, India had no constitutional or democratic right in Kashmir and this dismal affair will always remain a black chapter in her history.

Question.—What do you think is the way to settle the Kashmir problem peacefully and amicably ?

Answer.—Why, I have already told you that the matter should be decided by an impartial and free plebiscite on the basis of adult franchise. With this objective in view all the non-Kashmir armies, regular as well as irregular belonging to India, Pakistan or any other country should be made to leave the State. The administration of the State should be in recognized neutral hands and equal opportunities should be afforded to all the political parties to place their point of view before the country. No outsider should be allowed to enter the State during the period of plebiscite to do any political propaganda. Whatever the verdict of the people, all concerned should bow to it.

Question.—Don't you think Kashmir Muslims can be swayed by fanatic religious appeals by the Muslim Conference leaders ? Our Muslim masses are very backward culturally and educationally. They cannot appreciate the value of freedom and progress. I am afraid they will not be able to cast their votes on the merits of the case but will be driven to do so by sentimental appeals of their pro-Pakistani co-religionists. I agree with you that very few of them will vote for accession to India. Yet I cannot refrain from saying that it will be in their own interests if they vote for joining India. India is a democratic,

secular and progressive State. At any rate the Congress leaders have repeatedly and invariably declared it to be so. Our Constitution has been prepared on the basis of these proclamations. There is no distinction of caste, creed or colour in any sphere of public activity in India. On the other hand, Muslim League leaders have announced, time and again, that they want to build Pakistan as a Muslim State on the basis of the fundamental teachings of Islam. Obviously this is a baneful and a reactionary ideology. This is simple theocracy practised in this year of grace 1950. How can any democrat wish that his country should join such a State ; much less can a non-Muslim, particularly a Hindu, tolerate to live in such a State. To allow the Kashmir Muslims to do as they like is a good principle but when we know that they will make a bad choice under the influence of fanatic religious appeals we should put them on the right track.

Answer.—You have begun to take a very weak stand. You have no moral right to arrogate to yourself the responsibility for the welfare of the Kashmir Muslims against their will. It is open to you that in the proposed plebiscite you preach and propagate your point of view as forcefully, clearly and unhindered as any other individual or party. If you believe that India is a progressive, prosperous and a secular democratic State and that Pakistan is

reactionary and theocratic you can place all the facts and figures before the Kashmir people to prove your contention. You can reasonably demand that all the facilities to propagate this view should be granted to you as are allowed to other people. But it is height of un-reasonableness and glaringly undemocratic to say that because the Muslims will be swayed by the appeals of pro-Pakistan leaders, therefore they (Kashmir Muslims) should not be allowed to express their will and should be made slaves of a country and a nation which, you think, is progressive and democratic. All parties should have the right to preach their ideology and viewpoint but the final decision of the future of Kashmir should rest with the people of the State. They have not only the right to make this decision but they have also the right to make a wrong decision. That is the fundamental principle of democracy as I know and believe in.

Before proceeding further to fully answer your question, I might make two observations in this connection. First, I must say that as the matters stand at present, there is every likelihood that pro-Pakistan parties in the Kashmir Valley are in danger of not being allowed to preach their point of view unhampered. The pro-Indian nationalists are at a great advantage. They have been vigorously preaching their views during the past three years with all

the resources at their command and they have also been ruthlessly suppressing the other points of view. They are still in charge of the Government machinery and might remain so for more time before the day of plebiscite. So you can easily realize that the scales are already titled against the pro-Pakistan side.

Secondly, you should know that even according to Congress logic, your argument is fallacious. Suppose it was argued three years ago, on the eve of Independence of India, that the Indian masses were backward and could not realizet he responsibilities of a liberated nation and therefore they should continue to be under the dominance and tutelage of British imperialism, would you or any nationalist agree to it ? An honest reply would be an emphatic negative. Indeed, no sane man can say at this advanced day that the freedom of any country could be withheld on the assumption that the people concerned are ignorant or backward. Freedom is the birth-right of all people and no power can deprive them of it on any excuse or pretence. An average Kashmiri is much more awakened than an average Indian. So he can make his own choice. I may also tell you that you are not so much afraid of the fanatic religious appeals of pro-Pakistan leaders as you are of the results of the appeal. If such appeals would result in Kashmir's accession to India, no nationalist would mind them.

Indeed, the Kashmir Nationalist Muslims have been doing their best to rouse the Muslims by religious appeals on many occasions but as this was done to foster Gandhian Nationalism in Kashmir, it has been tolerated and even encouraged. But when religious appeals go against them the propaganda becomes fanaticism and condemnable behaviour.

Let me now examine your main point—that India is a secular State and Pakistan a theocratic country—which, like all Congress Nationalists, you take for granted as true. I do not believe as you do, that India is a secular democratic State. Nor do I agree that it is progressive. It is a pity that an average Hindu has been rendered quite incapable of discrimination by the powerful publicity of the Congress Press and the preachings of the Congress leaders. However, when we are sifting matters to arrive at the truth, we should not accept the statements of these leaders at their face value nor unhesitatingly believe in what they say. We must be sceptic and try to see if their utterances are correct and if their doings are in accordance with what they profess. Everybody will agree, I believe, that if their actions belie their sayings, their preachings are of no value. It is the practice that matters and not the professions of any individual, group, party, class, community or nation.

It is repeatedly asserted that the Congress is a democratic organization which stands for the equal freedom of all people without distinction of caste or creed; that it is ideologically quite different from the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S. But this is not correct. People not satisfied with what is on the surface and accustomed to look a little deeper can easily find out that so far as practice is concerned there is no qualitative difference between these so-called national and communal bodies. Despite what they state from time to time, all espouse the cause of Hindu revivalism; all are wedded to religiosity. Had Congress sincerely and energetically upheld the banner of secularism and composite Nationalism there would be no occasion for the partition of India or the creation of Pakistan. Indeed, the Muslim League could then never have become so powerful and the two-nation theory of Mr. Jinnah would never have become so bewitching. It is because the Congress under Gandhian leadership, always in rivalry with the Hindu communal organizations, adopted such programmes which brought it popularity among backward Hindus, but scared away non-Hindus, that this great and glorious association degenerated into a sectional body and lost its revolutionary and nationalist character.

Just throw a glance round the whole of India and mark what developments have taken

place during the last three years of independence. Barring the repeated pronouncements *ad nauseam* that India is a secular democratic State, hardly any signs are visible that it is so. Culturally, great efforts are being made to revive ancient reactionary Brahminism. Non-Hindus, particularly Muslims, are being threatened that they must be prepared to imbibe this culture or go out of the country. Hindi in Devanagri script has been accepted as the national language of the country though not more than 30 per cent of the people can read or understand it. Strangely enough not even millions of Hindus know it. In northern and central India all people, including the majority of Hindus, know and use Hindustani in Persian script. Hindus are editing widely circulated newspapers in Urdu. Yet this language is being violently suppressed because it is supposed to be a relic of the period when Muslims ruled, though many Hindus contributed a large share to its growth. Urdu literature abounds in classical writings of Hindu authors. In Bihar, U.P., Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh (C.P.) where Urdu flourished for centuries, Hindi has been made the official language and medium of education in schools. That is not all. Efforts are being made by big Congress leaders, including provincial Premiers and Governors, that Sanskrit should become the national language of India as it is the true promoter of ancient Hindu culture.

Poet Tagore's song "Jana Gana Mana" has been recognized as the National Anthem of India with Bankim Chandra's "Bande Matram" as its equivalent. Both are incomprehensible to an average Indian, be he Hindu or non-Hindu. But because they are in Sanskrit (the former in Sanskritised Bengali) there is a sentimental attachment to them. For many years the Congress used to bracket Poet Iqbal's "Sare Jehan Se Achha" with these two. After independence this has been banned altogether in nationalist circles because it is in Urdu. This song is equally sweet, elegant and melodious and what is important more comprehensible than the former two. Yet it has been blacklisted.

Cow slaughter is being progressively prohibited in all parts of India. The Constituent Assembly has included it in its "Directives of State Policy" instructing the provinces that it might be entirely banned. Why ? Not because it is economically sound or helpful but because the Hindus have religious regard and sentimental reverence for mother cow. Can these be the attributes or a secular democratic state ?

When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru took over charge of the Premiership of independent India on 15th August, 1947 he did it at midnight because Hindu astrologers ordained so. Brahmins came at the auspicious time to

perform Vedic rites and ceremonies. Subseqently also on several State functions he performed these religious rites. Other Congress Ministers, both central and provincial, have been doing alike. Quite recently on May, 1950 a temple enshrining the life size marble statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba in the Dandi March pose was opened on the Municipal Hall grounds by Pandit Pant, Chief Minister of U.P. at Banaras. Such statues of the Mahatma have been erected in innumerable places in India and everywhere the ceremony of religious significance for the people was performed as an integral part of the political life of the country and since the advent of independence, as a State function. Is all this proof of India being a secular State ?

It is stated that India is encouraging composite Nationalism of all the communities, Hindus and non-Hindus alike; that it is also discouraging communalism in every shape or form. This is taken to be a proof of the country being secular in essence. But as facts show there is nothing of this sort. What is being actually done is the suppression of the voice of Muslims as Muslims, which is dubbed communalism. When it is the question of Hindus communalism the Congress leaders and Congress Governments find themselves unable and helpless to do anything. The Central Government of India decided that there should

be no denominational institution in India. It therefore instructed the Hindu University of Banaras and Muslim University at Aligarh to drop Hindu and Muslim adjectives from their names. Before the management of the Muslim University could decide what to do the conductors of Hindu University, all Nationalists of the deepest hue, refused to abide by the instructions. The Central Government accepted a resolution of the Parliament that there should be no communal political bodies in India. The Government decided to discourage such bodies in every way. The Hindu Mahasabha, Akali Dal and Scheduled Caste Associations refused to wind up their organizations. The Government had to eat the humble pie. But while the Government orders were still fresh, Muslim institutions in the provinces were forced to disappear. In West Bengal, the Islamia College of Calcutta was made to change into Central Calcutta College while institutions meant exclusively for Hindu students such as Vidya Sagar College still function as before. This is not surprising. Being in essence itself a Hindu communal body masquerading as the national institution, the Congress has spiritual affinity with and deep affection for the Hindu institutions. It cannot therefore wish ill of them. Only non-Hindu and particularly Muslim organizations—and there too those opposed to the Congress and not those that support it such as Momin Conference, Azad Muslim Conference,

Jamiat-ul-Ulema Hind, etc.—are anathema. If secularism means that the State and Politics should be entirely free from religious bias, we do not surely have it in India.

Hindus of almost all shades of opinion in India usually argue that Pakistan is a theocratic State and as such unable and incompetent to provide safety, security and equal treatment for non-Muslim minorities. This argument has been uttered so repeatedly and vehemently that many have come to believe it as a self-evident fact. Let us scrutinize and find out the truth. In history a theocratic State means one which is ruled by priests as the representatives of God. If this definition is accepted, then no reasonable man can call Pakistan a theocratic State by any stretch of imagination. At present Pakistan is ruled by elected representatives of the people, howsoever unrepresentative they may be owing to the limited nature of electorate that elected them. It should be remembered that such limitations apply to India as well. It is true that India has adopted a new Constitution guaranteeing formal democracy to the people on the basis of adult franchise. But Pakistan also is engaged in the task of framing a Constitution for itself and according to Pakistan leaders that Constitution will not be materially different from the one India has framed.

As regards the safety, security and rights of minorities in Pakistan, let me quote what Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister of that country stated recently in a speech made on the radio. He said:

" *I want to make it clear that every Pakistani is entitled to the same rights and privileges, irrespective of caste or creed to which he belongs. The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan has amply declared this fact through its Objectives Resolution. Some non-Muslims who are enemies of Pakistan say that since we, in Pakistan, want to have an Islamic State, there is no place for non-Muslims here. Nothing could be more misleading and more false than this propaganda. In my speeches I have repeatedly said that we want to build Pakistan on the foundations of the Islamic principles of equality, fraternity and social justice. We want to set up a social order in which every person, Muslim or non-Muslim, will not only enjoy the fruit of his labour, but will have the satisfaction that complete justice will be done to him in all circumstances. In such a social set-up every person will have the right of equality. In Pakistan the minorities are entitled to the same rights and privileges as any other section of Pakistanis. The protection of the minorites and their social progress is our sacred duty*".

One can easily dismiss this declaration as a propaganda stunt. But that can be done in the case of India also. Just now we are judging the two states by the pronouncements of their rulers. Hindu politicians wrongly think that they stand for secularism whereas Pakistan advocates theocracy. A thick cloud of dust is raised on this issue to tar Pakistan. But the latter is no more theocratic than India is secular. A State is theocratic when political power is held by priests and religious heads. That is not the case either in India or Pakistan. At the same time neither of them is truly secular because it is a long way from theocracy to secularism. Unless people are raised culturally it is very difficult to have a genuine secular State. Whatever the ideals of the leaders they are forced to cater for the prejudices of the people, so long as they want to remain popular and in the good books of the voters. Hindus and Muslims want their leaders to be religious-minded and believers in all tenets and rituals of religion, however, irrational and absurd. Unless a politician in India or Pakistan is prepared to face unpopularity and opposition he cannot preach, much less practise, secularism of the genuine type. Neither Congressmen nor Leaguers have the moral courage to do that. Both are therefore sailing in the same boat of building religious States with the only difference that while Pakistanis are doing so openly and frankly,

Indians are deliberately or unconciously playing deception by vainly asserting that theirs is a secular State.

You have bitterly commented upon the declaration of the Pakistan leaders in which they have said Pakistan will be a Muslim State conducted on the principles of Islam. But you forget that all Congress leaders, from Mahatma Gandhi down to a volunteer, have also been telling the world that their goal is the establishment of Ram Raj in India. What is the difference, I pray ? If the mere mention of Islam in connection with a modern Government is some thing repugnant to you, why is not Ram Raj so ? This is also a theocratic and revivalist conception. If after saying that they want to establish Ram Raj in India Congressmen talk glibly about secularism, democray and composite nationalism of all communities without distinction of caste or creed, the Leaguers also do the same. They also repeatedly declare that theirs will be the best democracy in which Muslims and non-Muslims will enjoy equal rights and facilities in all walks of life. If a democrat can live in India he can live also equally contentedly in Pakistan. If a Muslim should not feel any hardship in the Indian Union so should not a Hindu in the Dominion of Pakistan.

Question.—If you think that because at present India is growing into a Hindu State and Pakistan into a Muslim State therefore Kashmir being predominantly Muslim it should accede to Pakistan don't you see that it will manifestly be unjust to the lakhs of Hindus living in the State. If Muslims cannot tolerate a Hindu dominated centre of India why should Hindus be forced to suffer a Muslim dominated central Government over them. How do you propose to solve this problem ?

Answer.—Your objection is quite valid. The truth is that the partition of India has not totally solved the problem of minorities. In a way it has made it more acute. Anticipating this all the democrats, including ourselves, had opposed the division of the country on communal lines. But they were helpless because propaganda of Gandhian Nationalism and its reaction among Muslims in the shape of Jinnahism had brought the country to a stage where there was no alternative but to accept partition as the lesser evil. This is not our fault and it is no use now to quarrel with history. We are faced with a situation where we should make the best of a bad job. We must abide by the principle of greatest good of the greatest number. By accession of the State to Pakistan I think the large majority of the population, the Muslims, will be happier than otherwise. The question of minorities remains.

Possibly it would have been conducive to the happiness of the State if the whole of it acceded to Pakistan. But there are reasons to believe that the Dogra Hindus of the Jammu Province do not want to join Pakistan. If that is so and these people express their will to that effect they should be allowed to do likewise. The areas of the Jammu Province where the Dogra Hindus are in a preponderating majority is linked geographically with India. If we apply the same principles and arguments to these non-Muslims as we have advocated in the case of Kashmir Muslims we cannot reasonably refuse them the right of self-determination. The rulers of Pakistan will weaken their own case by evident self-contradiction if they deny this right to the Dogras. Then there remain the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Valley. The only thing that can be possibly done for them is that ample safeguards should be provided for them so that they may be able to live peacefully and honourably in the land of their forefathers after the State accedes to Pakistan. There is no denying the fact that condition of minority in both India and Pakistan will not be quite happy for some years to come. That is a legacy of the past. If we want to set this right we can do so by spreading ideas and thoughts of sanity, tolerance, moderation and justice. It is foolish and dangerous to believe that we can help Hindus of Kashmir by suppressing

the Muslims and deying them the right to make their own free choice in the accession issue.

Let us now have a look at the statement that India is progressive and prosperous.

In India of to-day there is less freedom in every walk of life than was enjoyed by people during the days of the British. In every province such legislations as Public Security Acts, Maintenance of Public Peace Acts, Public Safety Acts and Defence Acts are in existence which have curtailed the freedom of the individual to the utmost. Exactly one month after the promulgation of the new Constitution the Parliament passed a piece of legislation called the Preventive Detention Act. According to the provisions of this law anyone can be arrested and detained for a preiod of one year without any trial before a court of law. Even Goonda Acts promulgated obviously to curb the anti-social activities of ruffians, scoundrels and rascals are being usually pressed into service to suppress the critics of the Congress Grovernments. Thousands of people, men and women, educated, intelligent and honest are rotting behind the bars for the mere reason that they don't support the policy of those in power. There are rigid press laws which hardly allow freedom to the papers to express frank opinions about Government affairs or represent the voice of the people. The

Congress Governments are suppressing all undesirable opponents and opposition parties on the plea that they are either Communalists or Communists.

In independent India Congressmen are lording it over by interfering with the official work everywhere. They direct the officials to do not as reason, justice and law demands but as they want it so that their friends, relatives and acquaintances might derive some undue advantage. Even courts are not immune from this unwholesome influence. Several honest and straightforward judges of the High Court who have worked under previous regime lashed by their conscience felt urged to protest against this state of affairs and warned Congress leaders not to interfere in the even course of justice.

India's economic condition is worse than its political or social state. The country has come strongly in the grip of the big business and upper classes who are squeezing the masses. The Congress leaders who used to make abundant promises before the advent of independence and had solemnly assured to usher in an era of democratic Socialism soon after the British were driven out, are now unabashedly saying that it is impossible to adopt any programme of nationalization of

industries. They are not even prepared to abolish Zamindari or Jagirdari without the consent of the landlords and jagirdars who are in no mood to oblige them by self liquidation. Even big compensations to these classes do not persuade them to relinquish their centuries, old vested interests. And the Congress revolutionaries find themselves helpless.

India does not produce enough food to feed its millions. People are starving in many parts almost throughout the year and in certain regions famine conditions prevail for months every year. At the time of writing this book (August 1950) starvation deaths are reported from Bihar, Madras, Malabar and West Bengal. Broadcasting to the nation on these conditions Premier Nehru said that the gravity of the food situation demanded that it be faced in the spirit of a war effort because the food position has been and is serious.

Soon after the Congress came to power most of the controls imposed by Britishers on production and distribution of essential commodities of life were withdrawn to please the Big Business. This caused a sharp inflation and there was a huge rise in the prices of necessities of life. People suffered of want and starvation. There were protests. The Government was forced to impose controls afresh but not without having done a big

mischief. The prices may not have gone up higher since these new controls were imposed but they did not also go down. So the inflation continues. For the poor people goods are as scarce and unavailable as they were before. The standard of life has been considerably lowered.

The prosperity of a country depends mostly on the balance of trade with other countries. Figures available have shown that since independence India has had every year adverse balance of trade which is tremendous. In 1949 this adverse balance amounted to nearly Rs. 102 crores.

Is this the proof of India's prosperity? Whatever the Congress leaders and Congress Press might say to praise their own Government, we must see what the facts and figures denote. If the real conditions relate a different story we should not be misled by the prejudiced and biassed statements of the interested leaders.

Question.—You seem to suggest and impress upon me that Pakistan is an ideal modern State and India a reactionary, backward one. I am sorry that you should think like that. There may be a hundred faults in the Indian Republic but you cannot deny that in all respects it is better than Pakistan. Something

inside me tells me that Kashmir can be happy only if it accedes to India and not to Pakistan.

Answer.—You are doing me a great in justice by jumping to the conclusion that I believe that Pakistan is an ideal modern State. I never stated that and did not suggest it even by implication. By being a critical observer of recent developments in the Indian Union and by having pointed out certain current misconceptions regarding secularism, progress and prosperity of this republic, I am not necessarily an uncritical admirer of the other country. Far from it, I know that matters are not developing in Pakistan also to the entire satisfaction of a democrat. There are many defects in the administration of that country as well. To begin with it is certainly open to objection that in a country which is inhabited by diverse faiths and creeds, repeated emphasis should be laid on the teachings of one particular religion in connection with the governance of the land. This is a medieval conception and particularly objectionable in this modern age. Secondly, there is no doubt that there are certain powerful reactionary elements in Pakistan which want it to become obscurantist if not theocratic. Thirdly, upper classes, especially landlords and jagirdars, hold sway in every nook and corner in that Dominion. The few Princes left in Pakistan are enjoying unbridled autocratic power as they

did before. Freedom of the individual has progressively come under eclipse and the Press does not enjoy that liberty which is its right in a self-governing country. All this is there and it is not a rosy picture.

But what I surely want to impress upon you is this that while an average Congress Nationalist is too critical and usually condemnatory of Pakistan, he is entirely blind to the very glaring shortcomings of the Indian Union. Those in quest of truth should be unbiassed and see things objectively and dispassionately. The truth is that Pakistan is not an ideal State but when compared with the Indian Union, and only in this comparison, it is more prosperous, if not more progressive. If hypocrisy is not to be appreciated, we must admire the frank admission of Pakistan leaders that they want to establish a Muslim State though at the same time, as they say, they want to be also fair to non-Muslims as is enjoined by Islam upon its followers. In contrast to this the Congress leaders blow their trumpets that they are out to build a secular State while in actual practice, they are establishing Ram Raj, the ancient caste rule of India. From a strict democratic point of view both are objectionable. But it is a pity that you admire the hypocrisy of the Congress leaders and denounce the forthright way of the Pakistan

rulers. That is the point I want to make in bold outline.

In deciding the future of Kashmir we have to keep the recent developments and actual facts—not mere declarations, in view. Kashmir is predominantly Muslim. The large majority of the people have geographic, economic, and religious and cultural ties and affinities with Pakistan and not with India. Naturally therefore, Kashmir should accede to Pakistan and not to India. If it is made to join India by force or is bamboozled into doing so by hook or by crook, the consequences are bound to be disastrous. Kashmir Muslims will face constant frustration. They will never enjoy any emotional life. Take an instance. The Pakistan flag is the usual Islamic green-coloured banner with the Crescent inscribed on it, India's flag is of tri-colour with Dharma Chakra, a symbol of ancient Hinduism, in its centre. Can you say that the Kashmir Muslims can feel the same emotional thrill by bowing before the tri-colour as they will feel by saluting the Crescent? Again what emotional response can a Muslim have by chanting Jana Gana Mana or Bande Matram? But surely immense will be the joy which a Muslim will derive by singing the Pakistan National Anthem in Urdu language. Yet again take the case of lingua franca. If the present mentality among Hindus lasts for

some more years, Urdu is bound to disappear sooner or later in the whole of India. Kashmir Muslims will be called upon to read Hindi in Devanagari script or perhaps Sanskrit as their national language. What a frustration it is bound to produce and how painful it would be to Kashmir Muslims when they know that by joining Pakistan they could read Urdu in Persian or Arabic script as their national language.

You say there is something in you which tells you that Kashmir will be happy if it accedes to India. I suggest it is not any rational instinct ; it is age-old prejudice. You identify Kashmir with Hindus. You do not appreciate the Muslim, nor even the rational point of view. If you did so and if you look at the matter dispassionately you will agree that Kashmir's place is in Pakistan and not in India.

Question.—If, as you say, you believe that Pakistan is not an ideal State and that from the democratic point of view there are several shortcomings in the Dominion, why do you want Kashmir to accede to it ? Obviously we will suffer from all those defects after the accession, particularly the condition of the Hindus will become intolerable and unbearable. Would it not be better if the State remains independent ?

Answer.—I agree with you that in view of the partition of the sub-continent on communal basis and the harrowing developments immediately before and after the partition it would have been better if the State had remained independent at least for a few years till things had settled down in both the countries. As a matter of fact, this was the opinion that I and others like me had expressed as early as April, 1947. But the Hindus in general were so myopic and the Nationalists in particular so hungry for power that they insisted that the State should join India. Hindus thought that India could crush the State Muslims opinion easily and also keep Pakistan away by its military might. The Nationalists saw that if the State acceded to India they were sure to get power and suppress all opponents however popular. Incredibly enough, nobody seemed to care for world opinion. I need not discuss what actually happened. You and everybody knows that. But it is clear that the Kashmir war has led us to the inevitability of the accession and there is no chance now for the State to remain independent. The independence of Kashmir depends upon several factors. It must be desired by all sections of people. We are situated at a place where as many as five countries, including U. S. S. R., meet. All these countries must guarantee our independence because for obvious reasons we

cannot afford to maintain any big army to defend ourselves. In particular, both Pakistan and India must sincerely and whole-heartedly assure us of their support to our independence Before partition Kashmir Muslims and Pakistan, for various reasons, supported this proposal and if the State Hindus and the Maharaja had been wise, they would have gratefully accepted the suggestion. But as usual and characteristically enough, certain. Congress leaders indulged in their machinations and goaded the Maharaja to a suicidal course. Having made unprecedented sacrifices to overthrow the Maharaja and drive out Indian imperialism with the moral and material support of Pakistan, it seems futile to hope that Kashmir Muslims will be prepared to keep the State independent. Besides, the State has been badly damaged in this war ; it will need the help of a bigger country to again stand on its legs. We must not also forget that the days are gone for small countries to remain aloof and isolated. In the present day world, the progress of nations and peoples consists in coming closer to each other and forging ties of friendship. Having had no traditions of democracy Kashmir will tend to become reactionary and anti-progressive by remaining independent. If I or others advocated this course in April, 1947 it was never meant to be permanent; we wanted to remain independent only temporarily, till we could see how things developed in the neigh-

bouring Dominions and then take our final decision in regard to accession.

Question.— You say Kashmir cannot remain independent. I concede that your arguments in this behalf are sound. But you also affirm that the people of Pakistan do not enjoy the freedom that the people of a democratic country should have. It is therefore surprising that you should insist upon Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

Answer.— If you agree with me that Kashmir cannot remain independent then the only alternative left for the State is either to accede to India or to Pakistan. I have already explained why it cannot accede to India. Therefore it has to accede to Pakistan. I do not deny that by joining with Pakistan the States people will not directly and immediately achieve freedom—the freedom of my conception. We shall suffer from all the hardships and difficulties which exist in Pakistan and to which a brief reference was made earlier in this discussion. Possibly the Hindus will suffer much more than the Muslims because in spite of the specious pronouncements and hopeful declarations made by Pakistan leaders about the future of minorities in that country the psychological atmosphere prevalent there does not allow Hindus to live fearlessly. In actual practice non-Muslims have not yet been able

to get equal treatment with Muslims, as is often stated by those at the helm of affairs. But the question is, can any other course better the lot of the Kashmiri non-Muslim ? Suppose somehow or other the State is held by India against the will of the State Muslims ; would in that case Hindus be more comfortable, prosperous or secure ? The short-sighted among the Hindus think they would be. They believe that the Hindu-dominated centre of the Indian Union would be a guarantee against any high-handedness of the Muslim majority in the State. Theoratically that may be correct but we must see what would happen in actual practice. As we now know by experience the Muslims will never willingly accept this decision, the Government of India will have either to maintain Muslim puppets in power who can claim absolutely no following or administer the State directly or through the Hindu Maharaja. In any case the Muslims will become more and more hostile. They will be in perpetual rebellion against the Central Government. It would become a big problem for the Indian Union to suppress them. The Indian Army will remain in occupation for ever. The communal problem will become most hideous because the struggle will take the shape of a Muslim uprising against Hindu tyranny. With the passage of time the struggle will not gradually abate but take more and more fierce complexion. Politically conscious and educated

Muslims will always be groaning and sulking with legitimate grievance. Of course there is and there will never be any self-respecting, sensitive or freedom-loving Kashmiri Muslim with the Nationalists—the marionettes of the Congress leaders. The Government and people of Pakistan will be encouraging Kashmir Muslims to rise in every way. Skirmishes, shootings and raids all along the 700 miles border will never cease. A big area of land near the vast border will thus remain uninhabitated and devastated. Wherever Muslims feel frustrated or tired enough to fight the Indian Government they will pounce upon the local Hindus as the allies of the enemy. There never can be or will be any peace or security in the land in such circumstances. We have already had the most bitter experience during the last three years. Hindus generally believe that the conditions will improve soon and in this hopeless hope they tolerate all the present hardships. But things are not going to improve if there is no amicable and peaceful settlement according to the will of the people, the overwhelming majority of whom is Muslim. Indeed conditions are bound to deteriorate in future in the absence of any settlement. Kashmir may remain with India only when Muslims are either physically exterminated or transferred from the Valley to distant and remotest parts such as Madras or Orissa. So long as the Muslims remain alive in Kashmir no blandishments will

appease them. They will chaff under the obvious tyranny and high handedness of the Indian imperialists and continue to be cause of turmoil and unrest. Disturbed conditions in any country harm the minorities more than the majority. There cannot be any shadow of doubt that if Kashmir accedes to Pakistan peace and order can soon be restored in the State. Normal conditions will come back quickly, Hindus also will be in a happier position than they are at present. The Hindus cannot also forget that the puppet raj of the Nationalists has time and again sacrificed their legitimate interests to appease the Muslims to induce them to remain with India. In the beginning the Hindus consoled themselves that this was temporary and only to secure Muslim goodwill for India. They paid this fine or tax as a price for the Muslim's votes. But they know it fully that even this big price has not enticed away the Muslims who support Pakistan as ever. They also realized that if there is no early settlement of the issue, they shall have to make heavier sacrifices in future which is bound to ruin them. Verily thousands of Hindus have already left the State. If instead of desiring and imploring India to continue this strife with Pakistan against the will of majority which is leading to a disaster and a very dismal future the Hindus, taking courage in both hands, demand a rational and democratic course, they will lay the foundation for a better and a

brighter future for themselves. I do not believe that the peculiar current difficulties experienced by Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India will be permanent. This is a passing phase and before long the minorities will get a fair deal in both countries partly under pressure of world opinion but mainly with the growth of intelligent, tolerant and democratic consciousness among members of the majority communities. Undoubtedly the Kashmiri Hindus can prove helpful to the 12 million Hindus living in Pakistan and help themselves by bringing that day nearer if in the Kashmir imbroglio they adopt a sane, rational and broadminded attitude. What should be of greater interest to the fighters for freedom in this accession issue is that our path will become free of a big stumbling block if Kashmir joins Pakistan. So long as the State is forcibly kept with India the real struggle will go into the background and the communal strife will occupy the political stage. Reason will be overshadowed by emotion and sentiment. Religious fanaticism will sway economics and politics. On the other hand, if Kashmir becomes a part of Pakistan the communal problem will disappear almost forthwith and the struggle for social and economic freedom will start in all earnest.

Question.—You talk repeatedly about Kashmir freedom. Can you deny that India has granted complete freedom to the people

of Kashmir from the very day the State acceded to that Dominion ? The Dogra Raj has been virtually ended and it is practically the rule of the Kashmiri Muslims that has taken its place. Never before in the history of Kashmir did the people of the Valley enjoy such freedom. I doubt if Pakistan will ever allow Kashmiri Muslims to be free from the intervention of the Centre to this extent if the State accedes to that Dominion. A believer in Free People's Kashmir, like yourself, should have, therefore, supported accession to India and not to Pakistan. What have you to say to this ?

Answer.—There is no doubt that the Indian Government have given wide powers to the Nationalists to rule over Kashmir. But you are mistaken if you believe that because of this the people of Kashmir have achieved freedom or that Dogra Rule has come to an end. It is nothing of the sort.

The Indian Government have granted these wide powers to a clique or a gang who are their henchmen and not the representatives of the people of the Valley. These powers have been granted to them in the hope that the Muslims might be bamboozled into voting for accession to India. As soon as this object is achieved and India gets Kashmir, these powers are bound to be withdrawn and their place will

be taken by stringent laws curtailing all the liberty of the people including the Nationalists themselves. Then we will see the real mailed fist of Indian imperialism. Of course, everybody knows even now this fraud has not been working successfully in the State. The Nationalists are not the representatives of the masses and they have flagrantly misused and abused the powers. People are everywhere complaining against their atrocities. Even Hindus who should have, for obvious reasons, co-operated with the Government of India in working this fraud are displeased and openly express fierce resentment against the Nationalist Government.

As regards Dogra Raj, any one with the least knowledge of politics can see that it is not dead. It is alive and kicking as before. Only as a measure of strategy the Maharaja has gone in the background to let the henchmen of Indian imperialism save his throne from the onslaughts of the rebellion of Kashmir people. If and when the rebellion is finally quelled, the Maharaja will return to his scene of rulership as before. His authority, power and prestige will be restored to him and the Nationalists will find themselves at their proper place. India may dethrone all the princes in the Republic but she cannot afford to do so in Kashmir which is a Muslim province and on the borders of a

Muslim State. Here India needs the awe of a Hindu prince to maintain the prestige of the Hindu State.

Now let us suppose that the Dogra Maharaja is deposed in order to appease the Nationalists who assert that the Kashmir Muslims will willingly remain with India if Dogra Rule is ended. Will that improve the situation in any way so far as the Muslims are concerned ? The place of the Dogra ruler will be taken by the Hindu dominated Central Indian Government. For Kashmiris it will be king stork in place of king log. The Muslims would be in a worse position. Though for the Kashmir Muslims fundamentally the Hindu Government of Indian Union and Dogra Rule are the same, there is this much difference that they could at occasions wring out certain small concessions easily out of a weak autocratic prince but no such hope can be entertained from a strong totalitarian Government.

Question.—In India, as against Pakistan, we find that the princely States have been democratized. The rulers have become constitutional monarchs and everywhere the power and administration have been transferred to the people. Indeed, the instituti on of princes is on its way to liquidation. In contrast the princes in Pakistan enjoy the same unbridled

power as they did during British Raj. People in their States are groaning under the unbearable burden of autocracy. In view of this, is it not in the interests of the freedom of Kashmir that it should accede to India and not to Pakistan?

Answer.—In making the statement that the princely States in India have been democratized and power has been transferred to the people you fall into the common error that putting henchmen of Congress in the saddle means that the people enjoy the blessings of democracy. We should not fall a victim to the high sounding propaganda of the Congress Press and parrot like repetition that the States have been democratized. We should be critical and discriminating and find out what actually has happened in these dens of medievalism and autocracy.

It is true that the existence of hundreds of these States, most of them no more than small estates, was an anachronism and so far as they have been merged with neighbouring provinces or unions have been formed of them in order to introduce administrative reforms, their consolidation and organization is most welcome. But it is wrong to state that there has been any democratization in this process. There has been no abolition of the princely order. Princes are there at the top constitutionally endowed with ample power. They have been recognized as the fountain-head of authority.

They also enjoy fabulous privy purses running into lakhs of rupees. The new consolidation is in their interests more than for the welfare of the people. During the last two centuries the princely order existed solely with the support of the British bayonets. Even the smallest estate holder could not be touched so long as the mighty British Empire was behind his back. With British imperialism gone these princes could not stand even for a day in real democratic India. They would have been wiped off by the evolutionary forces which they had suppressed for long. Congress leaders have given them a new lease of life by this fresh consolidation. And not without reason. Basically a party of reactionaries, the Congress is organizing and crystallizing the conservative forces all over the country and the princes form a part of the scheme.

As regards the so-called popular Governments in the States, he would indeed be a bold man who could assert that people support these administrations. The Congress—or rather States' People's Parties—were never strong in the States and if choice were solely left to the people concerned in a large majority of the States, non-Congressmen would have been elected as new rulers. It was only under the direction of the Central Congress that local Congressmen were given power by the helpless

rulers of the States. Just as during the rule of the British the administrators of the States were appointed by the Political Department, similar is the case now when the underlings of the States' Ministry are thrust upon the rulers. The people have no voice now as they had none before. In one way, the present is the worse condition for them. Because the Congress Press, which championed the peoples cause in the old days, is supporting the undemocratic policy of the Congress Ministry and hoodwinking the backward and gullible people by saying that they enjoy the blessings of freedom.

Not only have all non-Congress political parties in the States vehemently protested against this imposition of rulers from above but mass meetings attended by tens of thousands were also held in certain States repudiating the 'popular' ministries. All this however has been in vain. Significantly enough when the popular resentment reached a high pitch, even the Congress organizations in some States' Unions (such as Rajasthan and Pepsu) were forced to disown the puppets of the Congress leaders. But unabashed the States Ministry upheld them. Discredited among their own men and no section of the people to support them these underlings still rule the States. Can we, in our senses, call this democratization of the States?

If this has been the constitutional development in princely India, the administrative and economic change has taken even a worse turn. Under the rule of the upstarts jobbery, nepotism and corruption are unchecked. Poverty, hunger, starvation and lawlessness have accentuated and, not unjustifiably, people look back and talk yearningly of the old days of autocracy when they were better off. A poor man can know the tree of freedom only by its fruits. The ones that he has tasted are so bitter that he has begun to detest the very tree.

Mismanagement and corruption reached such a stage that the States Ministry was forced to end the "popular" rule in Vindhya Pradesh and take over the direct control of its administration. If the false idea of prestige had not stood in the way, conditions in several other States and States Unions are no better and the Ministry ought to have willingly terminated the puppet rule there too.

Now, I do not hold any brief for the policy pursued by the Pakistan Government in regard to the States which have acceded to that Dominion. I am definitely, precisely and strongly of the opinion that the States, both in India and Pakistan, must be abolished lock, stock and barrel. There is no justification for the princes to live even as constitutional monarchs.

They have no democratic traditions and no suitable training to adjust themselves to the new circumstances of freedom. They are an anachronism and must disappear. But can you, after what I have explained above assert that the people living in the States in India fare better than those living in the States in Pakistan ?

From our own experience in Kashmir don't we feel in the heart of our hearts that we should have been more happy and contended—or, to put it negatively, less miserable, if the 'popular' rule of the Nationalists had not been thrust upon us. Now all opposition has been violently suppressed. Not even people with independent views can express their minds. Papers which do not support the Government are banned. Parties and persons critical of the authority are persecuted and victimized. The little freedom we had achieved during the last 19 years has been totally crushed out of existence. There is no legislature, no free platform and no free voice. Many Kashmiris shocked by the tyranny will go to the length of telling you that in spite of their inborn hatred for alien Dogra rule, they were better off in pre-October 1947 days than they are now. Of course, a few hundred Nationalists enjoying absolute power and pelf, are an exception. States in Pakistan and India cannot remain unaffected by the

rising democratic spirit in the areas surrounding them. Sooner or later they shall have to come into line with the people of neighbouring areas. Revolution is bound to envelope them. But it is in the interests of healthy growth that cliques unrepresentative of the people whether backed by Congress or League leaders are not thrust upon the people of the States in the name of democracy. Such a method will harm the growth of freedom movements by scaring away the illiterate masses and by alienating the sympathies of all liberal minded people.

Question.—India has adopted a democratic Constitution and become a Republic. The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights of citizenship to all the people irrespective of their caste or creed. Particular provisions have been made in the Constitution granting fullest autonomy to the people of Kashmir. This should be enough to assure you and others of your way of thinking that the future of Kashmir is safe if it decides to remain permanently with India.

Answer.—It is true that India has now a Constitution of its own but the Constitution is democratic only in name. The parliamentary constitutions of the modern world are generally of two kinds: one of the American type and the second of the French variety. The Indian Con-

stitution is based on both in the sense that the worst features of each of these have been taken over and included in it. The President of the Indian Republic will perhaps be more powerful than even the American President but he will be elected not by the people directly as in America. Yet he is invested with unlimited powers as were possessed only by autocratic Rulers of the past. This nullifies all safeguards and proclamations.

The Indian Constitution contains not only a replica of Section 93 of the Act of 1935 which was repeatedly denounced by the Congress leaders, but the corresponding clauses confer more powers on the President than were ever given to the imperialist Viceroy.

According to the Constitution, instead of a Federal Union, India will be a most highly centralized State. Provincial Governors are not to be elected; they will be nominated by the President. The Centre is entitled to interfere not only in the affairs of the provinces but also in the formation of Provincial Governments. With the handy argument of avoiding fissiperous tendencies the Congress Hindu leader stressed the need of centralization at every step while framing the Constitution. This centralization is the deadly enemy of democracy.

As regars the fundamental rights of citizenship there are so many conditions attached and the restrictions imposed upon that in the final analysis they have been altogether negated.

With this Constitution it is easy for a fortune hunter or an ambitious man to become a dictator. The future of democracy in India does not therefore seem bright.

I admit some special privileges have been granted to Kashmir in the Constitution, but these will remain only for the transition period and even then the President has the fullest authority to do anything himself or propose to the Parliament to take up any matter in regard to Kashmir. Besides, the provisions in the Constitution are not sacrosanct. If and when Kashmir decides finally to accede to India, Parliament which will be always composed of the great majority of Hindu members can and will amend these provisions to keep the control of the Central Government over Kashmir. Hindus in India can never afford or tolerate to see Muslims in Kashmir doing all they like. Dominance of upper class Hindus and their vested interest will always be safeguarded at the sacrifice of the progress and prosperity of Muslim masses. Discontented Muslims will be suspected to form alliance with Pakistan across the border and there will always be enough

reason for the President to declare an emergency in Kashmir and suspend its Government.

Question.—You admit that conditions in Pakistan are not normal and for some years to come minorities in that country cannot feel quite secure. Would it not be better if the present position in Kashmir is maintained, till the return of complete peace and absolute security in Pakistan ?

Answer.—Normal times with complete peace and security for all the people in India and Pakistan cannot return so long as there are no friendly and cordial relations between these two countries. And that itself is dependent on a just and democratic solution of the Kashmir Problem. But for this dispute relations would have improved to a large extent after the lapse of three years of independence. The wounds inflicted by partition would have been healed by now if the open sore of Kashmir did not exist. Most of the problems and differences that have cropped up between India and Pakistan have been caused by the Kashmir issue. There is every reason to believe that the recent Bengal tragedy which uprooted thirty lakhs of people from their ancestral homes in the begining of this year (1950) was a result of this dispute. Therefore if it is allowed to continue conditions cannot improve; indeed they will

become still worse and there can be no hope of any early return of normal times or peace in either country. You should not also forget that both the countries are spending crores of rupees, the bulk of their Budgets, on Military expenditure mainly due to this dispute. Both have suspended most of the development and nation-building plans on this account. If this drain on the national incomes is allowed to go on for some more years there will be no progress. Thus prolongation of Kashmir dispute is bound to ruin the people all over the sub-continent.

Evidently your suggestion will lead to a vicious circle. Any final settement of Kashmir should be postponed till normal times return in Pakistan and India ; and such times cannot return unless the Kashmir dispute is amicably settled. We have to break this vicious circle and the best way to do so is to peacefully end the dispute first.

Question.—Suppose the Kashmir people vote for India in a fair and impartial plebiscite but Pakistanis still insist that the Valley should go to them because the majority of the people is Muslim. What will be your position in that case ?

Answer.—I do not think that Pakistanis are such fools as to demand that Kashmir

should join Pakistan even after the people have voted for India in a fair and impartial plebiscite. But if they do so I, like all other sensible people in the world, will declare them as aggressors and fight against them by all means at my command, as then they will become the enemies of our country. Once the will of the people is unambiguously and unequivocally known a democrat's course is quite clear.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL FREEDOM

Question.—In order that I may fully grasp your views on this accession issue I want to know what is your conception of the ideal of Azad Kashmir. You strongly recommend that Kashmir should accede to Pakistan yet frankly and unambiguously state that by this accession the State's people will not achieve freedom. I had thought that from 15th August, 1947 when the British left this sub-continent and declared that India had become independent we, that is the people of India, and Pakistan, were free. You say that it is not so and even after the State's accession to Pakistan, as you prefer, the people will have still to fight for their freedom. Will you let me know in some detail your views on this freedom so that I may be able to ponder and then finally decide about this issue of accession to either country ?

Answer.—It is wrong to believe that with the disappearance of British imperialism in India the people of the sub-continent have become free. You are however not alone in cherishing this baseless belief. Barring the critical and discriminating few, almost all people in this country hold this view. During the British

rule this idea was sedulously fostered by the Congress Nationalists in order that enthused with such a high hope people might support the movement to drive out the foreigners. The Congress leaders raised hopes in the minds of the people that immediately after the withdrawal of the British, the country will overflow with milk and honey ; everybody will have enough to eat and drink and to be merry ; there will be dearth of nothing. It was repeatedly argued that all misery was caused by the evil intentioned British rulers and therefore their withdrawal would end all troubles. Three years of independence have proved that all this propaganda was groundless and the condition of the masses after independence has not improved ; indeed, if anything, conditions have worsened.

The end of British imperialism in India in itself was a healthy phenomenon full of great potentialities. Let there be no mistake about that. Inspite of the conditions having deteriorated after the day of independence, and despite the fact that innumerable people, including many educated ones, wish British had not left India so suddenly, there should be no doubt that independence is a big step towards the freedom of the people. But it will be helpful if we understand the limited scope of this independence and what remains to be achieved. Independence is not freedom. The real freedom

of a people consists in the removal of all kinds of restrictions on their activities in any sphere of life. People, in order that they be recognized completely free, must be free politically, socially, culturally and economically. With the withdrawal of British imperialists we have, in fact, achieved none of these freedoms. What has happened is simply this that the place of British masters has been taken by the Congress leaders in India and League leaders in Pakistan. So far as the people are concerned they are labouring under the same restrictions and unfair, undemocratic and unjust laws as were in force during the period of British Rule. Indeed, some of these laws and restrictions have been made more stringent. The British had many democratic traditions and institutions in their own country. They usually imbibed that spirit and when coming out to rule us did not and could not entirely forget or ignore those traditions while dealing with Indians and administering the local laws, however inequitous. Our Indian masters have no such traditions and having achieved absolute power all of a sudden, are ruling ruthlessly and even cruelly. Two things help the new rulers to hide their undemocratic methods. First, it is taken for granted that having been fighters for independence they will never wish or try to suppress the freedom of their own people. Secondly, the gullible public and a kept press supports them and in every way attempts to hide their faults. Free-

dom of the people therefore has become a forlorn cause in our land and we have to be more cautious and more heroic than before to fight for our freedom.

It has become a fashion nowadays to say that we have achieved freedom. Even most of those who think that they are critical of Congress leaders in power generally say that we have got political freedom ; now we must fight for economic emancipation. The truth however is that we are not free in any way. Even politically we are still in bondage ; only the chains that bind us to-day are of Indian make while previously they were made in London.

While scrutinizing the conditions in a society we should not forget that it is the real position of an individual that matters and should be the criterion of the progress of a people as a whole. Man created Society in order that he may progress and prosper. Alone he could not go forward. He had to co-operate with others to fight against the tyranny of nature and to achieve freedom from its vagaries. This voluntary co-operation of men to form society defeats its fundamental aim and original purpose if the condition of an individual in a society deteriorates. Sovereignty belongs to the individual and not to society. The yardstick with which we should measure the progress of society is the progress of the individual. Judged

by this standard the people of this sub-continent are not progressing at all. Because the freedom of the individual has received a tremendous setback in every respect, politically, socially, economically and culturally he is worse off than he was before.

Question.—What is your conception of political freedom and how would you like to see it applied in Azad Kashmir ?

Answer.—In a politically free Kashmir the people will enjoy all the civil liberties fully in every way. The fundamental civil liberties are liberty of the person, freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly. The civil liberties of one individual will not be validly restricted except for the protection of civil liberties of other individuals. In other words every individual will enjoy all freedom except the liberty to encroach upon the liberty of others. There will be no restrictions on the freedom of expression of any opinion either by word of mouth in private and public meetings or in the press. There will be full freedom to form associations for organized, proper and scientific diffusion of all ideologies be they on the basis of communal, sectarian, national, communist or class distinctions. There will be complete freedom of press and platform. Civil liberties will in no case be curtailed. Only violence will not be all owed to be preached

or practised in any shape or form by any individual or party. With this one exception, all parties and individuals, however critical of the Government will enjoy perfect freedom to propagate their own views on all matters political, social and religious. Even the smallest minorities, political, religious or cultural, will be protected by the State to fully enjoy this right. No administration which keeps its critics and opponents behind bars without trial when there is no national emergency, as in the case of war, shall have the right to exist even for a day. Laws curtailing the civil liberties of people shall not be allowed to remain on the Statute Book.

In the Azad Kashmir of our conception the following human rights and fundamental freedoms will be guaranteed by the Constitution :—

(*a*) Security of person.
(*b*) Exemption from all kinds of slavery and servitude.
(*c*) Freedom from all arbitrary arrest, detention and exile.
(*d*) Freedom of opinion and expression.
(*e*) Freedom of Assembly.
(*f*) Freedom of Association.
(*g*) Freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
(*h*) Freedom to be united in trade unions.
(*i*) The right to marry and found family.
(*j*) Freedom of residence and travel.
(*k*) Freedom from all arbitrary inter-

ference in private and family life, home and correspondence.

Having thus guaranteed the right of free expression of views the people will be at full liberty to choose their own form of Government and their representatives to man this Government. Every adult man or woman who is not declared mentally unfit shall be entitled to vote without any consideration of his or her social status or financial position. The voters will periodically elect the representatives for the Assembly which in its turn will form the Government to conduct the affairs of the State. Thereafter the voter will not suspend all his activities and stand aside as a passive spectator—till the next election as is the common practice in all the formal democratic countries at present. The voter will keep a vigilant watch over the activities of the Assembly and the Government. He will assist the authorities both by helpful and constructive criticism made in private and public congregations. A voter in Azad Kashmir will perpetually enjoy his sovereign power and no authority—not even the Parliament will deprive him of this. If any member of the Assembly misbehaves or goes against the mandate of the constituency voters will be entitled to recall him and elect another representative in his place. Thus ours will be the real working and functioning democracy in which the common man will

have enough interest. Such a democracy will safeguard the interests of the individual and such a political set-up will enable all people to take part in the administration of the country. There will be village, town, and ward committees of the people which will regularly and intelligently discuss the day to day affairs of the nation and help the representatives in Assembly to solve local as well as State problems. The Assembly will be the apex of the political structure which, with the basis of these primary committees, will rise tier after tier in the shape of Tehsil, District and Provincial Committees. All these will be functioning regularly, daily and enthusiastically. The Assembly will not be the only and the sole deliberative and administrative body in the State. These subordinate people's committees also will enjoy a share in their respective spheres in all local as well as national problems. The strength or weakness of the Assembly will lie in the strength or the weakness of the base on which it stands. In brief we shall have a Government of the people and by the people. It certainly will not be for the people. Because the age of tutelage which invariably proved a stepping stone for dictators should end. We will build a state which will be run by the people themselves and not by their representatives for them. Such a democracy will have little fear or chance to succumb or become a

tool in the hands of careerists and opportunists desirous of becoming dictators.

Question.—Don't you think that backward countries with diverse faiths, creeds and sects need strong men as dictators to guide them before they become democracies? What is your opinion about the dictatorship of the proletariat as advocated by the Communists? Do you approve of the totalitarianism as it obtains in Russia?

Answer.—I detest dictatorship in all forms and shapes. It is to save Kashmir from this curse that I am desirous of building a living democracy which will rest on the bulwark of a conscious, intelligent, cultured and vigilant electorate which will constantly supervise the activities of the representatives on various legislative and administrative bodies including the Assembly and Government, not periodically but from day to day. In our democracy the possibility of the birth of a dictator will be minimized. Dictatorship, whether of an individual or of a party, always tends to perpetuate itself and never allows people to become really free.

There are many things which we can and should learn from the Russian experiment. We can emulate the Soviet reforms in various spheres of social life. But as is natural in all

great human endeavours and experiments, there are flaws in Russian communism. The biggest curse in Soviet Russia is that of dictatorship and totalitarianism. Before and after the Red Revolution it was argued by the leaders of the party who came to power in that vast and backward country that in order to withstand the onslaughts of the reactionaries and the counter-revolutionaries the backward masses needed a powerful Government to guide them. So long as the standard of the people, they said, was not raised appreciably in all walks of life, the country could not afford to grant the luxury of freedom of association and speech to every individual and party without consideration of their antecedents and intentions. Only the revolutionists could be trusted with important positions and jobs. It was further argued that with the spread of political consciousness, culture and education, as also a rise in standard of life, the country will not need any Government. People will act rationally by themselves. The State will wither away. Sympathetic people all over the world agreed that this might be true. More than thirty years have elapsed since these and similar declarations were made. Three decades are surely long enough in which these pious sayings could be put into practice. But what has actually happened? The dictatorship has become stronger and there appears to be no possibility of its terminating in any foreseeable

future. Totalitarianism, that is the rule of one specific party, has become a permanent feature of Russian political life. Other parties with different ideologies are not allowed to exist. It is silly to believe that there is no need for another party in the land of socialism. The fact is that there is an awful regimentation of human mind and people are afraid not to agree with their rulers.

The State in Russia shows no signs of withering away. Indeed, it has become stronger and more authoritarian than before.

While learning a great deal from the great October revolution and its consequences, we have to be wary of all the pitfalls that are hidden under a beautiful cover which allures many inexperienced, romantic and sentimental young men. Our country, being culturally and economically very backward, is a fertile breeding ground for the dangerous doctrine of dictatorship and totalitarianism. Already nationalists are unabashedly rending the air with the slogan "one party, one flag and one leader." Such pernicious ideas must be stubbornly resisted by all lovers of democracy and people's freedom. If once these ideas take hold of our country men, it will be difficult to achieve real freedom in this unfortunate land. Kashmir will then pass through very bad times and not before it has had several blood baths

will it again come on the right path. We need democracy and democratic ways to reach the goal of freedom. With such an end in view we must avoid, at all costs, dictatorship and totalitarianism in our country. Of course, self-seekers, fortune hunters, careerists and opportunists are always advocates of dictatorship because they see that in this way they can easily fulfil their personal ambitions. The path of democracy is long and uphill but it is the only path which leads to our cherished goal and we should in no case give it up.

Question.—What will be the future of the Dogra Hindu monarchy in Azad Kashmir ?

Answer.—For three reasons the Dogra Hindu monarchy will and must end in Kashmir.

First, the Kashmiris have always considered the Dogra rulers as aliens and in turn the Dogras also have treated Kashmiris as such. There never has been any love lost between the rulers and the ruled. Dogra Rule is a stigma on the national pride of the Kashmiris which they are going to wash away at the first opportunity.

Secondly, the record of the doings of the Dogra Rulers, particularly of the present Maharaja, has been most disgraceful. The treacherous part he played in connection with the

accession issue does not leave any room for any consideration being shown to him.

Thirdly, Azad Kashmir will be a perfectly free State founded on the principles of democratic socialism. Such a State cannot be headed by a prince of a family with wholly anti-democratic traditions and record. We have had enough of the machinations and intrigues of the Dogra rulers. We can no more afford to allow them to be stumbling blocks in the way of the progress of our free State.

Question.—What will be the position of Hindus and other minorities in the political set-up of Azad Kashmir? The Hindu Maharaja having been deposed, they will have no one to look to during moments of communal tension and trouble. You don't suppose that with the promulgation of a democratic Constitution, however perfect, all people, including the Muslims, will immediately begin to think and act rationally and democratically. The revolutionary Constitution you envisage is bound to transfer all power to the people which, in the final analysis, means the Muslims who form the overwhelming majority of the population. So long as the present communal mentality persists, the tiny minority of Hindus in the Valley will be left at the mercy of the Muslims. The Hindus fully realize that power will have to be transferred to the State Muslims.

As their safeguard they wanted the State to accede to India, because then the Central Hindu Government would not allow the Kashmir Muslims to tyrannize over the local Hindus. With forceful arguments and convincing logic you have shown that in the interests of all concerned, Kashmir should accede to Pakistan and not to India. But tell me, do you or do you not consider it necessary that there should be adequate safeguards and dependable assurances for the Hindu minority in the State of Azad Kashmir ?

Answer.—It would be foolish to suppose that with the promulgation of the democratic Constitution of Azad Kashmir and the establishment of such a State all the people will at once give up their present communal mentality and begin to behave like perfect rational beings. Such a supposition would indeed be puerile· But I am sure, that having eliminated all possible causes of their narrow minded communal behaviour, the Muslims will adopt a more responsible attitude towards the non-Muslims minorities. The establishment of Azad Kashmir of my conception will, I believe, make Muslim as well as others more rational human beings than they are now. But despite this belief I am of the opinion that the minorities need certain specific and substantial safeguards, at any rate for some time to come, say ten years. What those safeguards should be is a matter

of detail that can be worked out by representatives of the sections and the classes affected. I might briefly discuss a few by way of illustration.

I think the representatives of people to all public bodies should be elected on the basis of joint electorates. In the beginning this might leave little scope for the members of minorities to be elected. So there ought to be reservation of seats for them, probably on the strength of their population, with the proviso that in all bodies there will be at least one member of the minority community if these are any in the area which the body represents. There should be no discrimination whatsoever against minorities in recruitment to State services and public appointments. All people should be treated equally and every individual afforded similar opportunity without distinction of creed, caste, class or birth. Such backward communities as Harijans should receive special encouragement in educational institutions and Government services. There should be minority boards in all districts as well as in the Centre composed of officials and non-officials, the latter comprising members from both majority and minority communities. All complaints and grievances of the local minorities should be referred to these boards and effectively and judiciously dealt with. There should be no public honour, however high, to which a member

of the minority community is not entitled on a footing of equality with any Muslim.

The fear of democracy arises from the mechanical equation of democracy with majority rule. In a sense it is correct to say that democracy provides for the rule of the majority; but democracy itself is based upon the recognition of certain human values of individual freedom. Whereas in all matters of everyday life which fall within the purview of a democratic State the opinion of the majority ought to prevail, it is at the same time obvious that the suppression of fundamental rights of a minority community, group or even an individual cannot come within the purview of a democratic State. It is only when the majority is composed not of free individuals, but of regimented, ignorant and fanatical masses, that the fear of tyranny by the majority over the minority arises and human values are trampled upon. But then it ceases to be a democracy, it becomes goondaism and fascism, though it might be carried on with the will and in the name of the majority. Democracy is consistent only with the rule of a democratic majority which keeps human values always within its sight. In a true democracy the motto is 'One for all and all for one', therefore the question of the aggression of a brute majority does not arise. We shall have such genuine democracy in Azad Kashmir.

In a real democratic set-up a highly educated community like that of the Kashmiri Pandits, has nothing to lose but everything to gain, provided it is led in a thoughtful and far sighted manner. The Pandits possess such qualities and capabilities which can endear them to any rulers desirous of buliding a new State on modern lines. Thanks to Kashmir's history, the Pandits have inherited a faculty of adjustibility to environment which few other communities possess. If security of life and property is guaranteed, the Pandits cannot only rise to the highest rung of the ladder in Azad Kashmir, they can also shine in the rest of Pakistan.

Muslims in Azad Kashmir should be generous enough to offer these and similar safeguards to minorities during the transitional period. Free Muslims will be the first and foremost to recognize that it is in the interests of Azad Kashmir that the Hindus live happy and contended without any fear in their minds. It is the highest glory of a democratic State that its minorities cherish the same affection for it as the majority. Such an affection is possible only when the minorities are treated fairly and justly and have no cause whatsoever for any legitimate complaints.

A grave responsibility rests on the shoulders of the Pakistan Government as well. There

should be no undue interference in the internal affairs of Azad Kashmir and no undesirable outsiders should be thrust upon the people as big officials. If Kashmiris are allowed to manage their own affairs, I am sure, there will be no communal bickerings in Kashmir.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC SET-UP

Question.—Do you think that the political freedom which you have explained in some detail will ameliorate the condition of the Kashmir people and raise their standard of life. If not what do you propose to do in that connection ?

Answer.—The political emancipation of a people is of little benefit unless it is accompanied by economic freedom. Indeed the former proves illusory without the latter. Political freedom, even if guaranteed constitutionally to any people, cannot last long if they don't enjoy economic freedom as well.

Our country possesses immense potentialities for economic development. A land so rich in raw material and sources of wealth as Kashmir can easily supply its people with all essentials of life in abundance. We have mountains full of minerals of various kinds ; forests abounding in fuel and timber besides numerous other products capable of being converted into hundreds of industrial commodities ; we have unlimited water power which can produce electricity in great quantity. For its fauna

and flora, sweet and delicious waters luscious fruits, natural beauties, landscapes and lakes, the Valley of Kashmir is world famous and if we can scientifically organize a tourist trade it will be a fruitful source of large income. Cottage industries of Kashmir such as shawl, gabba, carpet, wood carving, papier mache, silver ware, fur, woollen cloth and silk have earned the praise of great artists and connoisseurs all over the world.

But in spite of all this, the great majority of the people of the State have always been wallowing in the mire of poverty. From the day of his birth to the moment of his death, a Kashmiri lives in ignorance, unable to fully feed himself or his dependants, clothed in tattered rags and often the victim of avoidable diseases. Hundreds of thousands of women and children die prematurely for want of elementary medical aid. Unemployment is widespread and during the six months of winter 90 per cent. of our people remain without work. Why should this be so? It is evident that not only is this remediable; it is unnatural in a land that should have been very prosperous, flowing with the proverbial milk and honey. The reason for this deplorable state of affairs is not far to seek. The rulers of the country have been quite negligent and unmindful of the material or mental progress of the ruled. The exploitation of man by man, class by class and community by

community has been the principle on which our society is founded and is functioning. If the common man is to come into his own and if he is to benefit from all the gifts which nature has bestowed upon our country, this pernicious principle must be replaced by an equitable one which will ensure social justice to all and end exploitation in every form and shape. There should be a complete revolution in our dealings with each other and all men should be ruled by human and just laws.

At present, the economy of our country is predominantly agricultural. More than ninety per cent. of our people subsist in one way or other on the income derived from land. These people can be classified into three categories. An appreciable portion of them are peasant proprietors, that is they own the land which they cultivate. But a large proportion of the land belongs either to jagirdars or landlords who own it, but do not cultivate it themselves. The number of these absentee owners is small but they appropriate a large part of the produce and leave very little for the consumption of hundreds of thousands of their tenants who labour throughout the year on the land to make it yield the fruit. This system of landlordism has caused national poverty and is our main economic problem. There can be no bigger social injustice than the existence of the institu-

tion of jagirdari and landlordism. These must therefore be totally abolished, *i. e.* peasants must become the proprietors of the land they till and cultivate. He who does not till the land and produce the crop has also no right to own it. That should be the first principle of our agricultural economy.

It would, however, be wrong to believe that mere abolition of the jagirdari and zamindari systems will make our country rich or that it will fully ameliorate the lot of our people. The change will no doubt add a little more to their meagre income and also free them from the demoralising subjugation to an idle, and therefore sinful, class but it alone will not raise them to that level of life which is their destiny. For that we shall have to do many other things. We shall have to rationalize and mechanize agriculture. Fragmentation of land has deprived it of the virtue of good yield. Peasants have to be told that in order to produce more and with less energy and expenditure, land must be cultivated not on the individual holding basis but on the principle of co-operation. Those peasants whose holdings are adjacent to each other and in the same area should form co-operative societies of producers and with the help of modern scientific agricultural implements, fertilizers and better seeds, produce more. It will also save more than fifty p. c. of labour on the land which can be diverted to other channels for the production of national wealth.

Question.—In this policy of the expropriation of jagirdars and landlords will any compensation be paid to those deprived of their hereditary or acquired property? If your answer be in the nagative, don't you feel that it would mean extreme hardship for a whole class and will also be contrary to the principle of social justice which you espouse.

Answer.—There can be no question of compensation. From the point of view of social justice, jagirdars and landlords have been looting and plundering the nation for many years if not centuries. To ask for compensation merely because that loot and plunder will now be stopped is brazenness. It cannot be countenanced. Of course in Azad Kashmir all willing workers will be provided with suitable jobs. To find employment for all will be the responsibility of the Government. If the expropriated jagirdars and landlords are intelligent enough to adjust themselves to the changed circumstances and do not resist or resent the advent of the era of social justice, they will find ample opportunity to be equal and respectable citizens of the State. They will get enough work to earn their livelihood—probably in the co-operative Agricultural Societies or new industries that will be started. It can never be the intention of the revolutionists of Azad Kashmir to throw the expropriated classes on the streets as a result of vindictiveness. Of course if they don't get

suitable employment they should get compensation. But if exploiters resist they will consequently suffer and no one can then help them.

Question.—What is your opinion about the land being nationalized? Will it not help if the whole land is owned by the State and the peasants hold it as tenants from the State as sole landlord.

Answer.—I do not think that nationalization of land will be helpful in the long run. It will lead to concentration of power in fewer hands which causes, in its turn, totalitarianism, regimentation and other political and cultural abuses. The State can own certain area of land to maintain model farms and fields and gardens. It will, of course, keep a close vigilance over the co-operative agricultural societies and help them to consolidate and efficiently function in every way. It will also receive the annual rent of no more than 15 per cent. of the net produce of land. But in the interests of democratic socialism, there will be no nationalization of land in Azad Kashmir.

Question.—How do you want to implement the programme of industrialization in Azad Kashmir?

Answer.—The first and foremost item in our industrialization will be electrification of

the country by the use of water resources. As I said earlier, Kashmir possesses immense water power in all parts of the land. We will draw up a comprehensive scheme for a network of small hydro-electric projects so as to leave no village without power, when the scheme is implemented. Of course, there will also be bigger projects wherever possible, for larger towns and cities. Having created this wherewithal, we will begin to industrialize the country according to local sources of raw material and needs. Our industries will be diffused and not concentrated at a few places. They will be run by local co-operative societies of producers composed of men who have been freed from agriculture after it is rationalized. Barring a few of the key industries none of our industries will be nationalized, for the same reasons as have been mentioned in connection with agriculture above. We will encourage the growth of co-operative societies to run industries in all parts of the State so that no need for concentration of political power arises and democracy is not impaired.

For the industrialization of any country we need four things,—raw material, electric power, machinery and labour, both skilled and unskilled. We possess enough of raw material and we can easily produce electricity. We shall have to import machinery from abroad and this will require money. If we spend only the

amount that was paid to the Maharaja as his privy purse, *viz*. Rs. 60 lakhs, on this purchase, we can within a few years, progress a good deal. Add to it the great wealth that jagirdars and zamindars were plundering from the peasants and it is clear how big a sum it will be. It is reasonable to believe that the peasants will be willing to pay a part of the extra income that they will get after the abolition of jagirdari and zamindari to industrialize the country when they realize that it will, in its turn, make a further addition to their income. There is no dearth of unskilled labour in our country. As regards technical ' know how ', help and advice, we hope the advanced countries will be generous. The object of rationalization of agriculture and industrialization of the country will be solely to produce more and more commodities for use of the common people so as to raise their standard of life and not to derive any profit for a class or section of people. Laws will be framed and strictly observed with this purpose in view. Exploitation will be totally non-existent in our State. Thus the more our country is industrialized and able to produce wealth the higher will be the standard of life of the people in Azad Kashmir. An economically freed people will be in a position to devote enough of their energies and time in cultural pursuits and take increasing interest in them. They will thus be able to enrich their

intellectual and spiritual lives in the real sense of these words.

Question.—What is the difference between your plan of democratic Socialism and Communism as it obtains in present day Russia. From what I have heard so far I cannot make any big distinction between the two. I think your path will ultimately lead Kashmir to Communism.

Answer.—You have fallen a victim to the common mistake that all socialistic programmes are identical with Communism and are therefore overtly or covertly a part of the Russian world programme. Yet this is not true. I have already told you that there are many things that the progressive people all over the world can learn from the Russian experiment. But at the same time sagacious men should avoid the mistakes that Russian leaders have committed and which have deprived them of the world leadership to which they were entitled because of their humanistic ways and achievements. Whatever justification there might have been at the time of the Russian revolution for holding the belief that in the interests of the freedom of the exploited masses all industries should be nationalized and centralized and that during the transition period there should be dictatorship of the proletariat, ultimately leading to a classless soceiety and the withering away

of the State, in actual practice we have found that during the past thirty-three years leaders of Russian Communism have not been able to achieve any of these ends. Undoubtedly planned industrialization on a big scale has shown excellent results, and the Russian masses are economically better placed than they were ever before. But this has been achieved at a great cultural sacrifice. The nationalization of industries under direct Central Government Control has necessitated ruthless administration and denial of political and democratic freedom. The individual in Russia has been totally eclipsed by the class ego in whose interests he can be and is being sacrificed at every step. The Russian worker to-day may be better fed, better clothed and better housed but he enjoys absolutely no freedom to criticize beyond that which the rulers allow him. He must obey or go to hell. In Azad Kashmir we do not want to have well fed pigs—we want spiritually and intellectually free men, free in every respect. With this aim in view we will stubbornly avoid repetition of the mistakes committed in Russia. We will industrialize the country but not in the way that will force us to strangle the voice of those who run the industries. We will not demand efficiency and more work from them at the point of bayonet. We will lay the foundations of our industries in such a manner that the workers' co-operative societies run these with the sympathetic assistance and under

the affectionate supervision of the Government. Also there will be no centralization. Our industries will be spread all over the country according to the local possibilities and needs. In no case are we going to sacrifice the democratic freedom of the people for the industrialization of the country. To us the individual and not the country, class, nation or community, is sovereign and supreme. He cannot be eclipsed, enslaved or subjugated in any case.

Again, modern Russia believes in the dictatorship of the proletariat during a transitional period, which Communist leaders used to say, will lead to a classless society and the withering away of the State. In actual practice nothing of that sort has happened during the long period of thirty-three years of Bolshevik rule. Indeed the prolitarian dictatorship has become the dictatorship of the Communist Party. The State, if anything, has become stronger and does not show any signs of withering away. There is no freedom of opinion or conscience. Only one political organization, the Communist Party, is allowed to function and rule. To defend this practice by saying that these methods are employed to achieve a laudable end is morally indefensible. Bad means can never lead human beings to good ends. It is not only the end that should be laudable but the means utilized to secure it must be morally right. If dictatorship, totalit-

arianism, suppression of free thought are fundamentally bad, they cannot become good when employed by Communists. They can never lead to good results. In Azad Kashmir, therefore this should not be allowed to happen. Our ideal will be the establishment of the classless society but by completely democratic methods. We believe that if the vision of classless society is rational, it should appeal to every human being who is himself basically rational. Men freed from inhibitions, and tyrannies of exploiters will think and act rationally, strive for a classless society. It is wrong to suppress free opinion however unpalatable, by violence. They must be allowed to come in close touch with rational opinions and be exploded. That is the only way to deal with vicious ideas. In Azad Kashmir people entertaining any doctrines and views will be completely free to express themselves. Industrialization or any thing else will not be allowed to interfere or curtail this right of the people or of any individual. Totalitarianism will be abhorrent to us.

We will develop our economy neither on the pattern of capitalist imperialist countries by allowing uncontrolled free adventure in which exploitation of workers is no crime, nor shall we allow the centralization of industries necessitating control in fewer hands. Free

adventure and *laissez faire* might not endanger individual freedom apparently. But so long as exploitation of a class by a class or man by man is not stopped and there is no equity and justice in economic dealings, freedom is an illusion. Centralization of industries, which also necessitates centralization of political power in fewer hands, undoubtedly endangers individual freedom. It leads to totalitarianism and regimentation. In such spiritually choking atmosphere, economic freedom, wordly progress and even prosperity become of little value. We shall steer clear of both these dangers by taking a third course. We shall build our economy on a co-operative basis in which decentralization of industries as well as political power will be the main feature. Of course there will be planning by the State. All exploitation will come to an end. Everything will be produced for the consumption of the community and nothing with the profit motive. At each step of production we shall take the utmost care to see that in going forward we do not in any way curtail the freedom of the individual. Because, we believe that originally society was created by the individual for his personal advancement and not to enslave himself. When in any move in social affairs this prime and original motive is lost sight of, it becomes reactionary and must be abandoned. In any case, the sovereignty of the individual should be maintained and protected.

Question.—Which industries would you like to have in Kashmir? Can you let me know the names of some of them and the places where they will be located?

Answer.—This is a matter which can be dealt with by technicians and industrialists. I am not competent to answer it. I can only say this much that we have immense water power and raw materials in our country. It is surmised that besides coal, petrol and iron there are other minerals, hidden in the bowels of our mountains which they can be made to disgorge. Having made a proper survey competent technicians, engineers and industrialists can make out a plan in consultation with the Government of Azad Kashmir for the industrialization of the country. One can safely say that industrialization on democratic basis can make the people of Kashmir happy and contented. The country will become self sufficient and stand on its legs. The present deplorable poverty and appalling destruction of life can be stopped.

Question.—What about the cottage industries?

Answer.—The present condition of cottage industries is not satisfactory. They shall have to be consolidated and organized on a democratic basis. At present artisans are being

mercilessly exploited by cruel and merciless capitalists. That will have to be ended at once. Their place will be taken by the co-operative societies of the artisans on trade basis. These societies will be assisted and encouraged by the Azad Kashmir State in every way. Ultimately these industries also will have to be run by power, where possible, to save labour but during the intervening period they will continue as at present, but not in a disorganized, orhpaned and neglected manner. The Azad Kashmir State will evince great interest in the spread of cottage industries and the welfare of the workers employed in them. They form an important part in the present economy of our country and will be integrated in the future economy of Azad Kahsmir.

It is not only the queston of production in our cottage industries that is important ; the sale of their produce is also by no means less important. Kashmir has been famous for its cottage industries throughout the world for many centuries. At one time our shawls were the rage of Europe in general and France in particular. But indifference, even hostility of the Government and unscrupulousness of various traders have given a set back to this trade and our wares do not sell as abundantly now as they ought to have with modern facilities of transport and international trade at our command. Azad Kashmir will enthusiastically

take up this problem and not only open new avenues and markets for these goods in distant lands but also weed out all unprincipled and unscrupulous dealers who indulge in immoral means and underhand methods while dealing with foreign customers. Only those business men will be encouraged who have 'Honesty is the best policy' as their motto. We shall have trade agents and trade commissioners at all important places not only in neighbouring countries but also in far off lands who will keep the Government and through the Government the societies of craftsmen informed of the variations in tastes and of the criticism of our products so that our artists remain abreast of all developments and produce goods of high order according to needs. This liason is bound to give a fillip to the production of our arts and crafts and enrich our country.

We have also to develop the immense potentialities of our tourist trade. I need not dwell on the natural beauty of Kashmir and the great possibilities that have been visualized by competent authorities about the influx of visitors into the beautiful Valley if scientific publicity is organized outside and all amenities are made available for visitors inside. I may however state that there are countries, much less fortunate in being endowed with natural gifts than Kashmir who make tons of money

annually by dexterously attracting visitors and making them comfortable in every way. We will have to learn this art of serving visitors. There are dozens of beauty spots in the Valley. If all these are linked with the city by good roads ; if amenities of picnic, lodging and board are made available at these spots and if cheap and easy transport facilities exist to visit these places and above all if these beauty spots are publicized in foreign countries in a suitable and scientific manner, we can expect as many as two lakhs of people to come to the Valley each year. What a huge sum this number will leave behind for our people it is not difficult to guess. But we must remember that this trade can be established, developed and stabilized only when those who visit the Valley even once return fully satisfied in every respect and see no cause for complaint. A great harm has been done to this trade again and again by the unscrupulous hawkers, traders, hotel keepers and houseboat owners who want to get rich overnight by fleecing visitors. This unwholesome way has to be stopped.

In this connection mention should be made of the famous Hindu shrines like Swami Amar Nath and Martand, in Anantnagh District and Shardha Ji in Karnah Tehsil which are holy in the eyes of the entire Hindu world and to which thousands of pilgrims flock every year. If these pilgrims are assured complete security

and afforded due facilities to visit the sacred places, there can be no doubt that we will add an immense number to our visitors. The tourist trade is doubly blessed. It enriches the country which is fortunate to have it ; it also proves a vehicle of cheap propaganda for the people who prove sagacious enough to treat the tourists kindly and friendly. If we know how to impress favourably the thousands of visitors by our good manners and gentle ways of treatment they are bound to spread a good opinion about us in the four corners of the world. And a country, however small and insignificant in other ways, which can bcast of such a numerous army of foreign well wishers will never lack friends in days of need.

Above all we have to remember that as a country desirous of developing the tourist trade, it is in the interests of our progress and prosperity that we have the most amicable and friendly relations with all countries in the world particularly the neighbouring lands. We must be on the most cordial terms with India no less than with Pakistan.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Question.—What is your educational and cultural programme for Azad Kashmir?

Answer.—Political freedom and economic development are very important matters by themselves but I believe that most important of all is cultural advancement. Until and unless the prevailing ignorance, intellectual backwardness and spiritual slavery are destroyed by spread of education and knowledge, all progress in other directions is bound to prove illusory. The structure of any real democracy stands on the awakening of the people concerned. If they are ignorant and superstitious, as our people are, then the edifice of democracy stands on sand and is in danger of falling down at any moment. The more the people are educated and cultured the more stable will their democracy become. As a matter of fact, democracy is non-existent in a backward country. It is false to state that a country is democratic when the people are steeped in ignorance. In such countries demagogues flourish and rule in the name of democracy. Intelligent, selfless and spiritually liberated people are not respected in such atmosphere. A country desirous of

becoming democratic must fight ignorance, superstition and prejudice. It is only when hero worship is replaced by self-reliance, blind faith by intelligent understanding and ignorant belief by critical discrimination in a people that it can be said of them that they are fully equipped for real democracy which will lead them to the goal of freedom. In Azad Kashmir we must make great efforts to achieve this end.

Education will be entirely free in the primary and secondary stages for all, both boys and girls, in Azad Kashmir. And this pious declaration would be there not only on paper but steps will be taken to see that all facilities are provided throughout the State in order that citizens can get themselves easily educated up to the matriculation standard. All villages comprising of a hundred souls or above will have a primary school. All villages with a population of five hundred will have a middle school. High schools will be established at all central places easily accessible from the surrounding villages and these schools will have boarding houses attached to them so that outside students may feel no difficulty in prosecuting their studies. Greater facilities and stricter vigilance will be provided in case of girl students.

After successfully passing the matriculation examination students will be selected according to their aptitudes and inclinations for further

studies. Those who are found fit for academic courses will be allowed to enter the University and take their degree either in Arts or Science. But those who appear to be suited for some technical profession will be admitted to such colleges for receiving that particular training. Those who do not show any signs of fitness for getting higher knowledge will be asked to discontinue their studies and recommended for a suitable job in an office or workshop or industrial concern. Nothing will be permitted to be done in a haphazard way and no waste of human energy allowed.

Azad Kashmir will have its own National University and it will impart education and training through various colleges of high standard in all arts, sciences and technology. This University will teach medicine, engineering, agriculture, minerology and manufacture of various sorts. Education in all colleges of the Azad Kashmir University will be free but the nomination of students will be made by the Government on the recommendation of the Head Teachers of the High Schools so that no unfit applicants get admission into any college.

Intelligent students will be encouraged at every stage of their educational career by all possible means to develop their latent capacities. At the termination of their college course facilities will be provided to them for research and higher studies.

In every village there will be a small library containing books on general knowledge and information as also a reading room with one or two dailies, a few weeklies and monthlies for the study of the village folk. This library and reading room will be managed by the local people's committee.

There will also be a mobile library in every Tehsil of the State containing books of extra-ordinary knowledge. This library will be visiting every village once a month and issuing books to those who will have previously gone through the whole library of their own village but still feel their thirst for knowledge unquenched. The different mobile libraries will be exchanging their own stock of books so that the villagers can always get new titles from their own mobile library.

In the cities and big towns libraries and reading rooms will be established mohallawise and in place of mobile libraries there will be big ward libraries.

Every industry and every big business or trading concern in which two hundred or more people are employed will be expected to have a library and a reading room attached to it for the benefit of the workers.

Education and information will be imparted to the people in Azad Kashmir through the medium of the screen. Probably this method will have to be applied more extensively and frequently in the beginning than any other. Mobile Cinema apparatuses with pictures of varying interests and dealing with diverse subjects will be shown from time to time all over the country. We can fight indolence, apathy, superstition, lethargy and disease by exhibition of suitable pictures to the backward country folk. We can make them enthusiastic about national progress and inspire them with high ideals and hopes by proper display of films some of which we can produce locally. So long as literacy does not spread a good deal, we shall have to depend on this visual educaion. Even when our countrymen are literate this medium of spreading knowledge will be greatly helpful.

In a democracy the great source of knowledge, culture and strength is an independent Press. Our papers will be completely free to criticize and guide the democratic State and its people towards the goal of freedom. I believe the moment a State begins to suppress the Press, however critical of those in power, it ceases to be a democracy. Steadily but surely it becomes anti-democratic and finally totalitarian. In the beginning it stops the most vehement type; then lays its hands on less objection-

able and ultimately ends with killing even the loyally critical. None but those who are parasitical are allowed to live. This shall not happen in Azad Kashmir if it is to be true to its name.

Question.—Do you suggest that even abusive and vulgar journalism will be tolerated in Azad Kashmir ?

Answer.—I have always been of this opinion that if any State encourages decent, independent and constructively critical journalism, abusive and vulgar type of papers are bound to die by inattention. In a really free State newspapers of low taste cannot find any readers. By suppressing them the State makes martyrs of them. They should be allowed to die by exposure. The truth however is that uptil now in most cases the Kashmir Government has been suppressing critical, independent and intelligent papers and encouraging the abusive parasitical ones. This will not happen in Azad Kashmir.

Because of their independence and high standard the journals in Azad Kashmir will be purveyors of real knowledge and culture. They will be of different categories and interests. They will be interested not only in politics which appears to be the main theme of our present day newspapers ; they will discuss sociology, philosophy, medicine, science in general, industry, economics, engineering,

agriculture and such national problems of importance. Their circulation will be wide and there will be hardly any citizen of Azad Kashmir who will not read some newspaper regularly daily.

Uptil now the teaching of fine arts such as painting, music, sculpture, dancing etc. have been totally neglected in the curiculum of studies in our schools. There have been some private efforts in this behalf. But for want of official encouragement all such endeavours have, as was inevitable in a culturally backward country like ours, met with dismal failure. Only a few years ago Hikat and Roh (dancing and singing) were quite popular among our womenfolk. But both have almost disappeared due to negligence and cultural degeneration. We must revive our folk song and dance. We must improve and popularize them. There can be little doubt that in ancient Kashmir painting, engraving, sculptors and other such arts were in great vogue. Our forefathers had achieved a high standard of skill in these as can be witnessed from so many old monuments that have been unearthed from all over the State. How beautiful are some of these relics ; how fascinating and attractive to the eye ! We have to reawaken that fine sense to understand, appreciate and create art among our people. In Azad Kashmir, the cultivation of fine arts will be an inalienable part of education from the

very start. Boys and girls in the primary classes will receive training in the elements of painting, music and other such arts so that they can learn to express life even as small children. At no stage of education will this part of culture be ignored. Of course in advanced classes only those will take to the fine arts who find natural inclination and bent of mind towards them.

There will be Academies for fine arts just as there will be Academies for sciences to foster their growth. All private efforts to popularize fine arts will be encouraged, subsidized and helped in every legitimate way by the State. Clubs and Societies for particular Arts to look after and safeguard the interests of the artists of that class will be recognized on Trade Union basis and given special facilities for advancement. We can ill afford to forget that the real cultural progress of a country can best be known by the condition of the fine arts in that country.

In bygone times Kashmir had taken big strides in certain respects. History is witness to the fact that during the long period of Hindu kings as well as during the rule of Muslim monarchs and Mughals our ancient land made enviable progress. Great thinkers, versatile writers, famous poets, skilful artisans, historians, astronomers, physicians, sculptors and others flourished all through these ages. With the advent of Pathan Rule we fell on bad days.

Progress came to a standstill. The dark age began which continued gloomier during the barbarous rules of the Sikhs and Dogras. No Kashmiri has made any original or notable contribution during this dismal period of our history. What is worse, we have almost forgotten even the glorious cultural heritage of our forefathers that had accumulated through an uninterrupted period of nearly two thousand years, as if it did not exist. We are now struggling for the regeneration of our national soul which is all but dead. In this heroic fight it is not the seizure of political power that matters, though in itself it is important enough ; it is the cultural uplift that is of primary concern. And no cultural movement will be complete in this land unless and until we unearth all those treasures that our forefathers had earned by their efforts and are our right by inheritance. Every Kashmiri must be familiar with the achievements of his ancestors.

Azad Kashmir will have a very well organized Archaeology and Research Department manned by educated, intelligent and laborious young men endowed with the scholar's zeal. We can be proud that in the whole of India it is only Kashmir that has a continuous written history of past five thousands of years by the famous Poet Kalhana. Yet it is a matter of shame that we have done nothing to make this piece of literature scientific and accurate by our

own reasearch. So far it has been the noble task of outsiders to do so. Therefore, it has been sketchy and rather unorganized. Now we should energetically apply ourselves to it. There is vast scope for work of Archaeology and Research in our country and sooner we take to it the better. Azad Kahsmir will place in the hands of even the humblest of its citizens and familiarize him with the thoughts and ideas of those great minds.

Question.—What will be the position of Religion in Azad Kashmir. Will there be any State religion, that is to say a religion that will be backed and encouraged by the State ? Will materialists also be allowed to preach their cult ?

Answer.—In Azad Kashmir, there will be complete freedom of conscience and nobody will be forced directly or indirectly, to adopt or follow any particular religion or creed. People will be entirely free to propagate their own ideas about God and religion. The State will neither help nor hinder the activities of any community or religious sect. The religious places of all communities will be protected by the State. There will be no distinction so far as freedom of religion is concerned because Muslims and non-Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Materialists, Agnostics and Atheists will enjoy as great a liberty in Azad Kashmir as the followers of Islam. But in no

case will any individual or group of individuals be allowed to preach violence under the garb of religious propaganda. Intellectual and spiritual freedom being the fundamental and basic rights on which Azad Kashmir will stand, it is but natural that all ideas, views and opinions should have free vent.

The aim of this unrestricted intellectual and spiritual freedom is that the people of Azad Kashmir should, after knowing all viewpoints about the problem of religion, arrive at the truth by themselves. If any opinion is suppressed it is impossible to know the reality.

Question.—What do you think should be the national language in Azad Kashmir ? What will be the medium of instruction in the schools?

Answer.—The national language of any country can be only the language that is spoken by the people of that land. The people of Kashmir speak Kashmiri and naturally therefore this language ought to have been our *lingua franca*. But there are two reasons that this cannot be. First, having acceded to Pakistan we can no more think in terms of parochialism in this behalf. We shall have to take a larger and wider view as citizens of that big Dominion—Pakistan. Looked at from that angle it is plain that Urdu with Persian script will be

our *lingua franca* and it is meet that it should be so. For more than a century Urdu with Persian script has been the official language in our State even under the Dogra regime. All educated classes in our country, to whatever community they belong, know this language. It is being taught in our schools from the very start. Almost all our newspapers are printed in this language. Therefore, there can be no sane objection to it. The second reason against Kashmiri becoming the *lingua franca* is that it is neither a written nor a developed language. But this does not mean that this language should remain as it is at present. Azad Kashmir will see to it that Kashmiri is made a scientific written language; that its literature is produced in an organized manner and that it is fostered well.

As soon as enough textbooks are available in Kashmiri it will become the medium of instruction in the primary and middle classes. Prompt efforts will be made to make it the medium till the matriculation standard and books on all subjects will be written and printed in this language. But the study of Urdu will begin compulsorily in the Azad Kashmir schools from sixth class onwards. The medium of instruction in the University classes will be Urdu.

The script of Kashmiri can be Sharda or Persian. Sharda has nothing to recommend it now excepting the sentiment of being the

peculiar script of ancient Kashmir. There is everything to support Persian script; the soundest argument being that the National language Urdu will be in this script. It will be very easy for students knowing Kashmiri in Persian script to learn Urdu from the sixth class.

Question.—How do you propose to protect the culture of minorities in Azad Kashmir?

Answer.—From all what I have said already it must have been abundantly clear to you that in Azad Kashmir while allowing complete freedom to all individuals, groups and communities to adopt their own peculiar cultural ways, we shall strive to grow and foster the modern human culture. It will contain the elements of permanent values from all cultures and will form a synthesis of all. The minorities will therefore have nothing to fear from this. But possibly, growth of the Humanistic culture might take time and probably in the transition period minorities would like to be comfortable and live without fear of being dominated or hindered in the pursuance of their own ways of life. They will surely enjoy full liberty to have their own schools where they can teach Sanskrit and Hindi according to their own desire and plan. Neither will the Government interfere in this nor allow any other non-official body to interfere in it. Indeed the Government will

subsidize such activities of the minorities. The personal laws of the minorities which do not come into clash with the fundamental principles on which Azad Kashmir stands, will be safeguarded.

Question.—What will be the attitude of Azad Kashmir towards ban on cow slaughter as it obtains at present in our State?

Answer.—The existing law in our country prohibiting cow slaughter has been on the Statute book merely because of Hindu religious sentiment and Hindu rule. The views and sentiments of Muslims or their hardships have never been sympathetically considered. It is barbaric to sentence a human being for ten years rigorous imprisonment for killing an animal be it even the sacred mother cow. It has been most cruel to Muslims. In Azad Kashmir, such irrational laws can find no place on the Statute book. But there are two things that have to be thought over in this connection. First, cow slaughter has to be viewed as a problem of preservation of useful cattle. It would be ruinous to allow cow to be slaughtered blindly in order to display that we have a right to do so. For the good of the community and the welfare and prosperity of our country it will be necessary to see that young, healthy and beneficial cows are protected and preserved. Secondly Azad Kashmir cannot entirely dis-

regard or ignore the deep rooted sentiments of the Hindu and Sikh citizens. With the unstinted support of all rational, sane and freedom loving Muslims, our State will ban public slaughter of cows and punish such an undesirable action wherever it is done with the deliberate object of wantonly wounding the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus and Sikhs.

Question.—You have mentioned morality and stated that the citizens of Azad Kashmir will act as highly moral beings. May I know what will be the basis of this morality ?

Answer.—The people of Azad Kashmir will be moral because they will be rational. They will not accept any reward for their moral deeds in this world or hereafter. They will not act morally under fear of punishment by supernatural forces, but because they will spontaneously feel that to be moral is the natural behaviour of a man ; it is in his own interests and for the progress and prosperity of the race. To lead a good life will make him happy. Virtue will be its own reward. We believe that having arisen from the back ground of a law-governed nature, man is innately and inherently rational. To the extent he behaves irrationally he acts contrary to his own nature. All his spontaneous deeds are rational and all rational actions are also moral. A code of ethics not founded on

the principles of rationalism cannot guarantee social justice and human freedom. It creates distinctions between man and man, enslaves humanity and deprives the indivisual of his innate sovereignty, dignity and personality.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

Question.—I have not yet been able to understand fully how your programme is going to raise the standard of life of the people. Will you kindly explain that to me ?

Answer.—From what I have said already you will have observed that the economy of Azad Kashmir will be run on such a basis that in every sphere of production, be it agriculture or industry, exploitation and profiteering will be eliminated to the utmost. Nothing will be produced with a profit motive, as is done at present. All production will be planned for use of our people. This very idea is bound to revolutionize the mentality of the workers. Those who are now thinking that the quality and quantity of production is immaterial to them because it does not affect their wages will begin to think differently and work more energetically when they know that what they produce is their property. Coupled with this is the technological assistance which workers will get in Azad Kashmir for producing more. It will be little surprise if in such conditions our country produces many times the wealth we are producing now.

Question.—This I admit. But you have not so far made it clear how this extra wealth is to benefit the masses. For ought we know it might be appropriated by the new ruling class and the people may be left where they are at present.

Answer.—Azad Kashmir shall have a plan for the social freedom of the people just like the economic and cultural programme, so that the no class, old or new, is allowed to exploit the people or any section thereof. According to this social programme :

(*a*) It will be the sole responsibility of the Azad Kashmir State to provide suitable work to every man or woman willing to work.

(*b*) In case any one is left without a job in spite of his demand to be provided with work, the State shall have to pay him full wages to maintain himself and his dependents.

(*c*) All workers will be paid according to the quality and quantity of work they do. But in no case will the wages be less than a fixed minimum which will be arrived at after full consideration of the requirements of a worker and his dependents in the shape of nutritious food, clothing and housing.

(*d*) Every worker will be entitled to one month's privilege leave with pay after each calendar year besides ten days casual leave. A week will consist of 5½ days. No worker will be expected to work for more than seven hours a day.

(*e*) Workers will be entitled to gratuity, pension and life insurance.

(*f*) Women workers will be entitled to leave with pay for two months before and after child birth.

(*g*) Nurseries will be attached to all industries and big concerns where an appreciable number of women are employed so that during working hours children are looked after.

Question.—How would you apply this programme to the State services?

Answer.—In Azad Kashmir there will be but small difference between the salary of a minister and a chaprasi. Both will be recognized as human beings having equal wants and needs. The present disgraceful economic condition of a school teacher or a clerk and the luxurious way of life of a high officer will become a thing of the past, condemnable in the

eyes of all rational and free men. Every State servant however high, will maintain an acceptable minimum standard of life and will be paid accordingly. Of course this will not mean dull, mechanical and lifeless uniformity in social affairs. State servants will get amenities and facilities which their position, public responsibility and efficent discharge of duties demand in addition to the salary which they would get ordinarily. But in no case will the rank and file of State servants be starved while a handful of big officials at the top are paid fat salaries. That sort of social injustice can never be tolerated in Azad Kashmir.

It appears fantastic, incredulous and almost impossible just now that this sort of pure social justice can ever prevail. We are born with certain diseases in our society which form a part of our social self as it were. From the very day of our birth we begin to find and accept as inevitable these maladies. But when our mentality is cured and revolutionized and we begin to value freedom more than money, we will see that this prevailing state of affairs is most unnatural and the only rational thing is that all people should get social justice on the basis of equality of human beings. Generations to come will be appalled to find that we could passively put up with this most inequitous system.

In Azad Kashmir there will be absolutely no distinction between the sexes. Man and woman will stand on equal footing in all walks of life. There will be no social honour or public position which women will not be able to secure. They will be recruited in all civil and military services. They will fight for the freedom of their country side by side and shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk in all fields. In schools and colleges our boys will learn their lessons on the same desks and benches as the girls. Segregation of students on the distinction of sex emasculates a nation. It is a crime against humanity, against nature itself. We shall not allow to happen this in Kashmir. We will bring up our boys and girls together so that when grown up they have no inhibitions and fears.

The health of the people in Azad Kashmir will be the responsibility of the State. There will be not a single citizen of the State who suffers for want of medical aid. Throughout the length and breadth of the country, the system of hospitals, dispensaries, birth control clinics and health centres will be spread in such a manner so that no village is beyond the easy reach of any one of them. All these will be equipped with necessary apparatuses and medicines. There will be separate hospitals and doctors to fight peculiar diseases. Special care will be taken of women. There will be birth

control clinics with almost every dispensary and hospital in the State where all people unwilling to have more children than wanted will be given advice and help. Abortion for valid reasons such as weak health will be legalized and the doctors instructed to help women desiring abortion in early stages of pregnancy.

There will be special hospitals for children which will take care of the growing generations. In these hospitals, children will be treated for diseases peculiar to young age and mothers will be trained and taught to bring up children in a healthy manner and to protect babies against attacks of diseases which increase child mortality.

Dispensaries will be attached to the industrial concerns, agricultural farms, schools, colleges and other institutions where more than five hundred people attend regularly for any work. In schools, and colleges, all students will be trained in first aid.

This is only the preventive and the negative side of our programme dealing with public health in Azad Kashmir. We shall have a positive and a constructive side of this scheme as well. In our free State every individual will be medically examined free of any cost every six months. A regular detailed record will be

maintained of every citizen about his bodily progress or otherwise from time to time. The doctors will give advice to all regarding their health and see to it that the advice is followed and there is no material impediment in the way of doing so.

Most of our people fall prey to diseases at present because of less vitality and stamina due to under nourishment, mal-nutrition and generally unwholesome diet. Azad Kashmir will see to it that not only are the citizens of the State paid well to be able to maintain the minimum standard of health but also that the habits of eating are revolutionized. People should get better and more nutritious diet than even the well to do are accustomed to have now. Ignorance makes our people take food which has little value as nourishment to the body. This ignorance will be fought and dispelled. People will be taught the real value of each article of food. Nutritious food will be produced in greater abundance than at present. Wherever need be, corrective foods will be supplied free in schools to children suffering from anaemia or general physical debility.

In order that the national health might be improved all the surroundings in which our people live will have to be changed. The dirty conditions of our cities, towns and big villages is a perplexing cause of the deterioration of our

national health. We shall have to demolish and rebuild all the cities, towns and hamlets. It will be done in a planned manner with the purpose of sanitation, recreation and the health of inhabitants. There will be no city or town where parks for people are not laid down for recreation. There will be special parks for women and children with facilities they need. Houses will be built in the cities and villages according to a scheme so that with little money maximum accommodation and advantages are derived by people.

Much of the present day difficulties are experienced by us due to non-existence of transport facilities and amenities. In Azad Kashmir all villages will be connected with each other by roads. Big towns and villages will have metalled and tarred roads connecting them and these will be, in turn, connected with the village roads. It will be our endeavour to see that as many villages as possible are connected with the general roads by vehicular paths, and not simply by bridle tracks. Bus services in all parts of the State will be managed and run by the State itself since the Transport Department will be a nationalized concern.

Question.—Probably you are not unaware of the fact that the biggest cause of trouble for the people of Kashmir is the rampant corruption and consequential evils that exist in State

service. Have you any plan to deal effectively with it?

Answer.—Yes. Azad Kashmir will adopt extensive methods to tackle the problem and eradicate it. Our approach will be both positive as well as preventive.

At present there is hardly any Government servant who is above corruption. Bribery is the rule in every department, rather than an exception. But it is wrong to infer from this that those who man services are basically degraded and need punishment. In a large majority of cases, meagre salary is the cause of corruption. We cannot expect a peon who has to support a family comprising half a dozen members to live on Rs. 30 per month during these days of high prices without supplementing this income by other means. And the only available and easy method for the poor wretch is graft. To pay 1,500 a month to one servant and Rs. 30 or Rs. 40 to another when both have equal number of dependents—in many cases the latter a larger number—with the same human wants and needs and then to hope that the meagerly paid one will and can remain untainted by the temptation of peculation during the course of discharging his official duties is idle. In Azad Kashmir, therefore, the first step to fight corruption will be to raise the salaries of lower ranks to an acceptable mini-

mum. This will be a positive as well as most effective step that we shall have to take.

But this step alone will not put the matter right. There are people who are corrupt by nature and in spite of good and comfortable salaries they receive they do not hesitate to accept bribes. Otherwise we cannot account for the corruption among high salaried officials under the present regime. Such people have to be sternly dealt with and exemplarily punished.

Also we shall have to raise the moral standard of all citizens whether, officials or non-officials, to end corruption in all forms. For it is not the official alone who is to blame; the giver of bribes is no less a sinner, legally as well as morally, than the receiver. By education, by publicity and by perseverance we shall have to teach people that corruption is a sin and giving or receiving of bribes does not befit a community striving for the laudable goal of freedom. It is when our people have attained a comparatively high cultural level that this nefarious practice, cause of many evils, will see its doom.

CHAPTER VI

WORD AND DEED

Question.—I have heard with rapt attention this most interesting and attractive conception of the ideals of Azad Kashmir in some detail from you. You have made me forget my earthly existence by such visionary schemes of a free State. Though there are certain important variations and several improvements in your plan, it is not the first of its kind I have heard about. Such schemes were formulated before in many parts of the world. Indeed in Kashmir itself the National Conference had such a scheme and I was very enthusiastic about it till October 1947, the day on which Nationalists came to power. For many months I was day dreaming that we shall soon see Kashmir as an ideal State, progressive, prosperous and happy. But I was sorely disappointed when we saw that instead of implementing their great resolves what the Nationalists were actually successful in creating was a condition worse than what prevailed before them. The little freedom, political or otherwise, that we enjoyed in pre-Nationalist days also has ended and there is the rule of a small clique now in the country. This has produced its inevitable evil consequences and people suffer immensely.

Pardon me if I express my doubts about the implementation of your scheme as well. Bitter experience and disillusionment oblige me to be outspoken and to say that these schemes are promulgated to hoodwink the unwary masses and with their support to seize power. I ask what guarantee is there that your scheme is not published with the same object in view ? When once your party has captured the Government and you are firmly seated in the saddle you will also, I fear, go the way that the Nationalists have.

Answer.— You are perfectly justified in making harsh observations. Our people have had very bad experience in the past and if they have now become rather cynical there is little wonder in it. But we must find out the cause of this attitude and its cure.

Our country is very backward and our people live culturally on a low plane. They can be misled and misguided easily by demagogy and appeal to low sentiments and vulgar emotions. We have no traditions of democratic behaviour and co-operative way of life. In such an atmosphere it is easy for self seekers, fortune hunters, opportunists and generally unscrupulous people to exploit them. Democracy can be saved by no individual or group or a party. The last and the strongest safeguard of democracy are the people themselves who

should for that purpose be cultured, awakened and critical. We suffered because our people were not sceptic and vigilant enough to see where they were going.

The aim of Azad Kashmir Movement is not the capture of political power by a party. We do not believe that unless and until power is handed over to us this scheme of freedom cannot be implemented. Indeed such an assertion would go against the very grain of our philosophy. This would also be in glaring contradiction to the basic principles that we preach. Our main aim is to awaken people, to organize them, to make themself-reliant and critical of all the happenings and occurrences around them, to create an unquenchable thirst in them for the achievement of real freedom; in brief to let them advance culturally. We believe that there is no need to first capture power for this purpose. What is necessary is that the professions and practice of every individual fighting for Azad Kashmir are the same. What he preaches he also practises in his life. If we stick to the principle that what we profess can be translated into actions of every day life by all members of our party and also the party itself as a whole; if we do not condone or overlook the deliberate misdeeds of our members or the party collectively we can, without capture of power, usher in the Azad Kashmir State. By its exemplary behaviour our party must show

that before the Azad Kashmir State comes into being our party is in itself a miniature Azad Kashmir within our country. Logically and inevitably one day when our party becomes *coterminus* with the people of Kashmir. our dream shall have been fulfilled. Of course this does not mean that we shall not hold the responsibilities of Government if and when offered to us by the people. We shall always be prepared for that. But it will never be our aim to capture power for power's sake much less at the sacrifice of our principles. We believe that all those parties which say that they can do nothing and can never implement their programmes so long as they do not get power are not anxious to establish democracy or people's freedom ; they are only out to subjugate people by seizing power. We do not stand for it. In fact we abhore it.

Before political parties come to power they have a record of public activities. Despite their big aims, specious slogans and high sounding platitudes, it is not difficult for discerning and critical people to know the real nature of these parties. Whatever a party and its leaders do while still unequipped with power they are bound to do only with greater vigour when power is handed to them. There cannot be two behaviours of people, one in public non-official life and the other as participants in Government work. It is foolish

to believe that any individual or party can have two entirely different selves in two different capacities. The Nationalists did nothing new when in seats of power which they had not done before during several years of their struggle for power. They had ruthlessly suppressed democracy, let loose goondaism in the country and resorted to unscrupulous methods of brigandage in dealing with people. Nepotism, jobbery and corruption were in evidence in Nationalist ranks long before October 1947. Any one who had not kept his eyes shut or who was not gullible enough to be cheated by the slogans and speeches and statements of Nationalist leaders, could see and know all this truth for himself. Kashmir Socialists not only saw and analysed this but also repeatedly beckoned all the people about it. Therefore, they were not surprised by the evil deeds of Nationalists in power. They anticipated it all.

We do not want that our party should be judged by its pronouncements, programmes and plans. We should be known more by our actions. If our party does actually translate democratic ideals in practice within its ranks and also while dealing with people at large particularly with the opponents then it will be successful in ushering in the free State of Azad Kashmir ; not otherwise. Please don't forget that Azad Kashmir can be established only

when people are culturally advanced enough to be able to discriminate between right and wrong, when they cannot be easily deceived, when there are no more any blind followers of political demagogues, when every Kashmiri is a leader of himself. We want to bring about that state of advancement by not capturing power in our country but by behaving like 'friend philosopher and guide' of the people till they are really free.

Undoubtedly this is an uphill task and needs inexhaustible patience, persistence and integrity among those fighting for the cause of freedom to accomplish it. But the truth is that there is no short cut to our goal and we have to march on slowly and steadily. Those who think that freedom can be had by thrusting it from above can never achieve the real freedom for the people. They can, at best, have power for a party, a group, a class or a clique but they can never have the people's freedom. Theirs will always be a counterfeit coin by whatever name they choose to call it. The real freedom of the people rests on the solid foundation of the cultural advancement of the people concerned. Therefore, all sincere, fighters for freedom should first lay this foundation and then on its secure basis raise the mighty structure of freedom. Such structure can never be in the danger of collapsing before demagogy. It can never tumble down.

Question.—What are your weapons with which you want to fight the colossal ignorance of the Kashmiri people and put them on the road to cultural advancement to enable them to reach the goal of freedom ?

Answer.—We shall have to fight with the two mighty weapons of rationalism and humanism. Rationalism may be defined as the attitude of mind which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and has as its aim to establish a system of philosophy and ethics which can be verified by experience and is completely independent of all dogmatism, arbitrary assumptions or authority. Humanism is the philosophy according to which all men are equal in every respect; love of everything that is human becomes the integral part of our nature. We are sensitive to human happiness and to human suffering. Man as man is the highest value. The Azad party workers shall have to thoroughly understand these two principles themselves, fully grasp their implications and minutely know how they are to be applied. If only a handful of intelligent men and women can become perfect rationalists and Humanists, they can calm all opposition and lead people out of ignorance to the destined goal of freedom. Rationalism and Humanism are not two separate things. They are two sides of the same coin. They are not new but as old as man himself. All true religions of the world

claim to be based on these two principles. Azad Kashmir workers will pronounce verdict on all social affairs after having scrutinized them on the touchstone of these twin principles.

Question.—Suppose the scheme you have visualized is fully implemented, do you think the Kashmir people will become completely free ?

Answer.—Complete freedom of any people can never be achieved, for the simple reason that this goal is not static but a dynamic one. The world and its progress do not come to a stop even for a moment. They march on eternally. So the goal of freedom also is moving with times. What was the highest conception of freedom a few hundred years ago can no more satisfy us because the benefactors of humanity have opened new possibilities of development and progress in the meantime. What we can conceive at present to be the most perfect freedom by any stretch of imagination will not quench the thirst of those who will come after a century into this world. We can, therefore, only understand and explain the fundamental principles of freedom, but never define perfect freedom. That, however, should not worry us. Once we have been able to awaken our people and have made them culturally capable enough to appreciate freedom they are free and they will know how to proceed further.

We want that the individual in our country should realize that he is the maker of his own destiny and the builder of his own future. In human affairs, fate as controlled by unseen powers should have no place ; the possibility of chance has to be minimized. Man must come into his own.

CHAPTER VII

AZAD KASHMIR AND THE WORLD

Question.— From what I have heard so far I feel convinced that your views on the issue of freedom are sound and no sincere and honest well wisher of Kashmir can differ from these. I admit that I was influenced a great deal by sentiment, prejudice and irrationalism. I feel almost sure that this is the only way of my country's liberation. But will you please answer one more question which still haunts my mind. You have admitted in the very beginning of our discussion that neither India nor Pakistan are truly democratic States. I can also easily see now, after these discussions, that both are following a glaringly undemocratic course. Will it not retard our progress towards freedom if we accede to Pakistan ? You have said that recent developments necessitate that we should accede to one or the other Dominion and you have also given your reason why you prefer Pakistan to India. But tell me how do you expect to neutralize the adverse effects of this connection while fighting for the goal of freedom.

Answer.— It is ture that the present leadership in Pakistan is not wholly congenial to the

growth of the freedom movement I have envisaged. But you are wrong if you identify these leaders with the entire Pakistan people. There are, undoubtedly, elements in Pakistan, though weak at present which cherish the same vision of freedom as we do. After accession we shall have to co-operate with these elements, consolidate ourselves on Pakistan-wide basis and awaken the people of all the country. Of course our main task will still consist in educating our own people because the more work we can put in here the more effect we can produce, even in parts of Pakistan. But we should not forget that our freedom will ultimately depend on the cultural advance in the whole of Pakistan. That should not deter us. For, after all we cannot isolate ourselves from the rest of the world, to say nothing of Pakistan. The freedom movements of the people of the world will surely influence us just as our own ideas, activities and thought currents will affect the rest of the world. Humanity will be really free when the national States crumble and a one-world Government comes into existence. Our movement, apart from working for the freedom of the people of Kashmir, is also out to achieve that end. Because so long as national barriers exist and man is separated from man on geographical, racial or any such consideration, the freedom of no country, however, big or strong, can be safe, and certainly not of a few million souls like

our own. In certain ways, therefore, it is not an unmixed evil that we shall accede to Pakistan. We shall get an opportunity of close collaboration with people many times larger in number than us. More than ninety per cent of Pakistanis are exploited at present through diverse methods ; being culturally very backward they do not even know what is freedom. It is only reasonable to believe that when this torch of freedom is taken to them they will see light and be only too willing to join us in this crusade. With such huge support we will not only advance our own cause but also be instrumental in bringing that day nearer when, with the breakdown of man made barriers between one country and another, there will spring up the real bortherhood of man and one Government for the whole human race.

Question.— In the beginning of this discussion you stated that the sub-continent of India is one. Is there any possiblility of Pakistan and Indian Union becoming united again in the future ?

Answer.— If you have fully comprehended the reasons of the sub-continent's division into Bharat and Pakistan you can easily understand the possibilities of reunion. So long as the present leadership lasts in both the countries, particularly in India, there is not the ghost of a

chance for India and Pakistan to unite. With the revivalist Gandhian ideology to guide them leaders of contemporary India can never allow conditions to grow which will attract the Muslims of Pakistan to such a union. When the Congress leaders talk about the indivisibility of the sub-continent and their desire for reunion no democrat should be misled, and Muslims certainly are not dupes to believe that the Indian leaders want this in the interests of the Muslims or the peoples of both countries. Hindu leaders always desired to thrust the ancient reactionary Brahmanical culture not only on the Hindu masses but also on the Indian Muslims. Side by side the Hindu capitalists and big business also desired to extend their game of exploitation into those territories predominantly inhabited by Muslims under the cover of this cultural conquest euphemistically called Indian Nationalism. Sensing the impending danger the leaders of Muslims, as a reaction, started the campaign for a separate Muslim State to be run on the principles of Islam. This was fighting Hindu revivalism with the weapon of Muslim revivalism. It was not laudable or supportable from a rationalist point of view but it certainly was effective enough to fight the Gandhian creed. Incipient Muslim capitalists and upper classes in general played the same role as their opposite number in the Hindu fold. They supported this campaign with the purpose of capturing

at least that part of the field where Muslims were in majority. They could, they knew, exploit the masses in the would-be-Muslim State to their hearts' content and without any share-holder.

This is the *raison d'etre* of the partition of the sub-continent. But looking at the people of both Pakistan and India as also the economic, geographical, cultural, linguistic and other realities, an unbiassed man can say that these two countries are not different but supplementary to each other. It is destructive, harmful and even disastrous if they remains at loggerheads with each other. They can progress and prosper if they are on amicable and friendly terms. But this state, though devoutly to be wished, appears very difficult almost impossible to achieve so long as the present rulers are in the saddle. A new leadership, unaccustomed to look backwards, always in the habit of seeing forward, imbued with the modern humanistic culture should rise in India and Pakistan. These new leaders must adopt and own all the progressive and revolutionary elements of Hinduism and Islam which are neither different from nor antagonistic to each other. They should shun the reactionary overgrowth in which the soul of the fundamental teachings of the two great religions are enveloped. They must forget to quarrel on all unimportant and trivial matters. They must solely depend on

the methods of rationalism and humanism to decide all problems of controversial nature. With such refreshing outlook the masses of both the countries can come nearer each other.

In this great task, I believe Azad Kashmir has to play a very important role. In many respects our State has near resemblances to India as well as Pakistan. We cannot live without establishing close and sincere friendship and co-operation with both. We can, therefore, serve as a massive and strong bridge between the two to link them together.

It is dangerous to talk of political reunion. It creates grave and well founded suspicions in the minds of Muslims. It defeats its own purpose. A union can be effected only through violence and physical might. It can be achieved by vanquishing Pakistan. That is what most of the Hindu politicians want. People bred and brought up in reactionary atmosphere and fed with Gandhian revivalist ideas totally ignorant of human freedom may talk and act as Congressmen do but those who have fully grasped the essence of freedom, who are spiritually liberated themselves and want to see others freed likewise, should not talk of this reunion.

In this connection, let me repeat one thing which, I mentioned a little while ago. This

problem of reunion of India and Pakistan is not confined to this sub-continent. It is world wide. It is a part of the big problem of reunion of the scores of nations into which greed, lust and avarice of man has partitioned humanity. With the cultural advancement of man in all parts of the globe these partition walls must fall and not only will then Pakistan and India be reunited but all human beings will become citizens of one State, owing allegiance to one Government of the world. Man will come in to his own and this pride of territorial patriotism and sovereignty of the nation State will become things of the past. The Azad Kashmir leaders will strive for that great Reunion and whatever steps they will take in the meantime in educational, economical, financial, cultural, military or any other matters will be with the ultimate purpose of building their small and most beautiful country as an integral part of the coming World State. We will never lose sight of the fact that real freedom will ever remain a mirage so long as powerful States enjoying sovereignty without any check exist in the world. We shall never allow to breed the pernicious doctrine of racial hatred, or even national pride implying hatred of others, among our people. In no case and on no account will Azad Kashmir pursue a chauvinistic policy of national aggressiveness. We shall teach Humanism and love of man.

Question.— Do you approve of Pakistan's policy of pan-Islamism ? Pakistan appears to believe itself to be more a part of Middle East than of S. E. Asia. Is it not harmful for the people of Pakistan who were for thousands of years and till the very day of partition an integral part of India ?

Answer.–Geographically Pakistan is situated between the Middle East and S. E. Asia. It will therefore, have close relations with the countries of both the regions. The large majority of the people of Pakistan are followers of Islam and no one can deny that culturally they are associated more with Middle East countries than with India or almost any other country of South East Asia. Therefore, if Pakistan is having any, pan-Islamic policy so far as the cultural affairs are concerned there should be little wonder. If Hindus, whether they be in Malaya, Fiji, Africa or Japan, want to maintain and foster cultural ties with their parent country—India—and it appears natural to us, there is no reason why we should feel resentful or even show surprise if Pakistani Muslims establish closer and stronger cultural relations with the Arabic countries. It was the idiotic insistence of Indian Hindus that Muslims should not look towards Abrabia even for cultural relations that marred the chances of Hindu Muslim unity in India. they should now make a suitable change in this pernicious outlook.

Pakistan can have commercial and political relations too with the Middle East countries. Also for defence purposes she will have to make military pacts with them. All this is unexceptionable and no sane person need entertain any fears about it. Pakistan, however, cannot cut itself adrift from India or any other country of the S. E. Asia. Because, a big slice of the Dominion East–Bengal—comprising of two-thirds of the total population of the country is sandwiched between India and Burma. Also no country in this world in modern times can live in perpetual isolation from any of its neighbours. The economy of India and Pakistan is in many respects welded together. Any threat of military aggression to the one is bound to be felt by the other. Socially and culturally also, the people of the two countries are not aliens as the recent unfortunate developments make one believe. In some respects Hindus and Muslims of the subcontinent are nearer each other then are the Muslims of Middle East and those of Pakistan. It was a sad irony that the common features of both the peoples were not fostered by the leaders of the last generation and even the garulous Hindu Nationalists, while swearing by Hindu-Muslim unity and composite Nationalism, only furthered the cause of ancient Brahmanical culture in disguise which brought about the permanent rift between those

who had lived together in love for more than a thousand years.

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that Pakistan, if it wants to prosper, shall have to maintain neigbourly relations with India as with the countries of the Middle East. In that lies wisdom and safety.

And now I have stated my opinions and ideas without any mental reservation. I have answered all your questions to the best of my ability. It is for you to weigh all this, calmly deliberate over it and then decide your course. But may I ask you if your doubts about the Kashmir issue and the future of the people of the Valley have been dissolved by this discussion. Have you come to realize what freedom of Kashmir really means and how it is helpful that the Valley should accede to Pakistan in the interests of the Kashmir people?

Answer.—It is not possible for me to fully express myself just now. I feel composed and peaceful yet I am pleasantly bewildered. I have come, as if, into a new world. I am, intellectually and spiritually reborn. I am sure of this much that you have given me enough food for thought. It appears impossible that I can ignore this talk in whatever step I take in my life after this moment.

THE END